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PRICE ONE PRESE.



"DO YOU THINK I WILL DIE A DOG'S DEATH BECAUSE OF YOU?" SAID RALPH IN MENACING TONES.

THROUGH DAYS OF DOUBT AND SORROW.

# [A NOVELETTE.]

# CHAPTER I.

"Don't leave me to receive Barbara alone, DON'T leave me to receive Barbara alone, said Essie Lane, half-petulantly; "She is certain to be more or less difficult, and if I tell you the truth, I am looking forward to her visit with less of pleasure than fear. I am by no means

Stafford laughed, and turning to his pretty dister's fance remarked—

"Don't believe her, Craven; I shudder to think of the fate you have brought on yourself. It is a known fact that these very timid girls, after marriage, develop into awful shrews."

"You speak without experience," retorted the young lady. "The only women you really know are Aunt Kelso and myself. I am a miracle of amiability."

amiability.

Ralph Craven, looking up from his gun, re-marked with an air of profund relief,-

I am delighted to hear it; I confess Stafford's tam dengated to hear it; I confess Stafford's statement staggered me a moment. But may I ask why you dread Miss Barbara's advent? Is she hopeleasly disagreeable, repulsively ugly——?"

ugly " Or 'too good for this world,'" broke in Quentin Branscombe, the fourth of the party gathered in Redmond Hall.

"I can answer none of these questions," cried Essie, spreading out her hands tragically. "I have never seen her; beyond the fact that she is my first cousin, and a nurse, I know less than

nothing of her."
"No," added Stafford; "it seems queer, to No, added Stanord; 10 seems queer, to, does it not? But Barbara always lived abroad, with an invalid mother until three years ago, when aunt died. Barbara was just of age, and returning to England, at once commenced to train for her present vocation—odd fancy for a girl who has a clear income of three hundred. Now she has overworked herself, and is ordered rest and change of air; she wrote very prettily, saying she should like to come to us, and she thought that as we were her spletting we could to be that as we were her sole relatives we ought to be !

acquainted. She added that as she was quite un-certain by which train she could leave Glasgow, it was unnecesary for us to meet her at the station here."

"There is only another to arrive," remarked Quentin; "if she does not come by that, she cannot be here until to morrow."

"Will you meet it, Essie? You can take aunt

with you as a support."
"No, I most certainly will not; I've an overwhelming horror of strangers."

Even as she spoke there came a rumbling of

wheels on the drive.

"It may be an unwelcome caller," said Essie,
"let us retire to Stafford's den," and she fled to
the untidy bachelor apartment, followed by the

Presently the door opened, the demure servant announced "Miss Lane," and a young lady, wearing the dress of a nurse, appeared on the announced

She was tall, with almost black hair waving back from a low, broad brow; her eyes were large, dark, and soft; without being a pretty it was decidedly a very interesting and pleasant

As she hesitated, glancing from one to another, Stafford advanced bashfully, he was only twenty-one, and had not expected to meet quite such an attractive girl.

"We are very glad to see you, cousin Barbars," he said boyishly, "and trust you will have a jelly time with us." Then introducing Craven and Branscombe, he added "Essie shall speak for herself.

herseit."

"How do you do? And really you are not so formidable as I thought. But how on earth did you reach Redmond at this hour?"

"I took the wrong train, so could get no further

than Kinkelly Junction. I drove the remainder of the way, rather than wait on the platform."

"You must be nearly famished; excuse me, please,"—with a glance at the young men—

come, Barbara, let me make you known to Aunt Ketso, she will supply your needs. Stafford, remember there is a time to dine," and whisking Miss Lane out of the room she shut the door

noisily behind her.
Barbara had no cause to complain of her welcome; Essie, although but a slight, shallow little thing was attracted by her, making much of her; Kelso was good-nature itself, whilst Stafford

could think no service rendered her sufficient.
Quentin Branscombe, who was a guest, likewise showed a marked preference for her society, and perhaps the only member of the group who did not fall under her fascination was Mr. Ralph Craven, the tenant of Hollytor.

For some reason she could not give even to her-

Barbara disliked her cousin's fiance. was of good birth, handsome appearance, and ex-tremely pleasant manner, yet she not only disliked but distrusted bim.

She did not even very much believe in his love for Essie; although he certainly seemed devoted to that capricious little lady.

Essie was given to flirtation, but Ralph bore with her so patiently that the idea was suggested

Yet, if so, why should be have asked her hand I she had only a small income; the property being her brothers. He was but twentynaturally would marry; he might and have children, to whom his estate would descend only if he died first Essie would inherit all.

But Mr. Craven could neither hope for nor expect his premature decease, he was so appar-

ently healthy and vigorous.
"I am a wretch" said Barbara to herself; I will get rid of my most unfounded dislike, and mejust suspicione," but for all her efforts they remained with her.

She had been a week at Redmond, and had grown accustomed to the easy ways of the house; was gathering strength with each day, and all unconsciously drawing Stafford to herself.

She regarded him as a nice boy, only, he un fortunately, did not understand this, and believed her kindly interest in his pursuits sprang from something nearly akin to love.

They were walking together in the early morning, and she, with a laugh, said,—
"Coufess, Stafford, you think me a fraud. I did not even look ill when I arrived, and now I are the picture of health. You ought to punish me by sending me back before my holiday really

"If I have my wish," boyishly, "you will never

return to London and slavery."
"Slavery!" she echoed, with uplifted brows, "no work is less slavery than mine. I see ter-rible eights, it is true; but there is much to cheer one; and then I have always the consciousness that I am helping to make hard lives less hard, and cruel pain less cruel."

"I think you are almost an angel! I laugh now to remember how Essie and I misunder-stood you in our crass ignorance. I believe I was almost as much afraid of you as she."

Barbara laughed gally.

"Did I seem so very formidable? And, for-give me, I cannot imagine Essie afraid of one of

She doesn't give one that impression, but it's true all the same. Why, even Ralph laughed at her for her folly."

tentatively, "Mr. Craven is I suppose, greatly attached to her."

"Rather ! I can't for the life of me tell why. Essie is pretty and likes him; but he is such jolly good fellow that he deserves more than mere liking."

"You absolutely pin your faith to him? You are old and tried friends."

"Not old friends but true ones. Why do you

my answer.

Are you prejudiced against him? that Branscombe does not care for him; is it so with you ?" "I cannot tell. I must have time to consider

## CHAPTER II.

"BE good," said Essie to Ralph, "and Barbara and I will bring up the lunch backets. We shall be like grace with meat. We can lunch under Hollytor Mount, and please prepare for a lecture Stafford is an in if we find only empty bags. Stafford is an in-different shot; but you and Mr. Branscombe have

"You are more kind to me than I deserve,"
Ralph answered with a suile; "and if I have no
trophies to lay at your feet I shall hardly dare
to confront you. Miss Barbara, I leave Essie
in your charge. If you would reach us in safety I think you had best take the whip, she is a reckless driver."

"And this after my goodness," cried Essie, with mock indignation; but she blew him a kiss as he turned away with his companions.

She was excited and mischievous all the morn-

ing, so that Barbara was rather glad when the time came for them to start.

The drive was a long but a pleasant one, and they found the party waiting for them by the Mount, all bent upon satisfying the cravings of the inner man.

"Have you had good sport?" cried Essie,

springing out. "Very fair," answered Craven; "but Brans-

combe has bagged most." "I found the birds very shy," remarked Stafford, plaintively; "but sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. I propose that we eat, drink, and be marry."

It was a very gay little party, even Barbara, who was usually quiet, contributing to the mirth; Stafford listened to the low murmur of her voice until his eyes kindled, and his heart throbbed just a thought too fast. He even suggested returning with the girls, but Barbars, with a smile,

eaid,—
"With only an empty bag? Fie, if you accept defeat so easily you will never attain to anything great. Try again."
"If you bid me I can only obey," he half whispered, leaning nearer; "what is it in you, Barbara, that makes me wish to be an altogether different fellow to myself." different fellow to myself."

She was a little startled, but Essie spared her the trouble of answering, and presently they were on the homeward way, followed and regretfully,

at least by two pairs of eyes.

It was quite late when the men, wearied by the long day's sport, the tramping through stubble and over rough ways, returned. Stafford gave a rueful laugh when he saw

"I did my level best," he cried, throwing down his bag; but my best is poor. I have only a brace of pheasants to show for my day's labour and my skill."

Well, you should not be discouraged. From small beginnings mighty results are often reached," she answered in kindly fashion, as she followed Essie upstairs.

Her toilet, although becoming, never occupied

much time, so that she was first in the drawingroom, where presently Quentin joined her.
"This is good, Miss Lane. I so rarely get a
chance of five minutes' speech with you. Stafford seems always to monopolise you."
"Perhaps he thinks he has a prior right,"

Barbara answered, annoyed that her voice was not quite steady; "he is my cousin and my

"I am envious of him;" then, seeing her face change somewhat, he added, "No, I'll not say that, Stafford is a good fellow. He was my fag

at Eton. I am five years his senior; and even as a boy he was the best little chap going. He has a knack of never forgetting old friends, even though he makes makes many new, amongst them Ralph Craven."

"You dislike him," questioned Barbara, her quick ear noting the change in his voice. "I wonder why; he is well-bred, courteous, of striking appearance, and yet I share your distrust of him. Tell me what you know of him."

"That does not amount to much; I never saw him until six weeks ago, when he called on me with Stafford, at my chambers—I am a rather briefless barrister," with a bitter smile. "Even my first impression of him was not favourable, my first impression of him was not favourable, but Stafford swears by him. My subsequent acquaintance with Ralph Craven has not tended to draw me nearer to him; he is a gambler, and, unfortunately, is giving your cousin a taste for that kind of speculation. A night at Hollytor means unlimited loo and quantities of champagne. I am not an anchorite, but I do not play on principle; if I lost I should be ruined; if I won I should have the fear that I had sent some other fellow under. I wish you would use your influence with your cousin about such matters,

he would do anything for you."

Earbara hesitated; there was just a flavour of passion in Stafford's manner towards her, to which she objected; it was very foolish and evanescent of course, but he was a nice boy, she housetly liked him, but she did not wish to give him the like that he cared for him in anything him the idea that she cared for him in anything

but a platonic way.

"I am afraid," she said, "you over-estimate
my induence, and it would be an unthaukful
task to warn Stafford against Essie's lover."

task to warn Stafford against Essie's lover."

"She will be a miserable woman if ever she marries him. But, of course, I have no right to sak so much of you, and I am foolish to waste this half-hour in talk of others. Miss Lane—Barbara, you know who and what I am—do you think it would be possible to care——"

"Dear me," said Mrs. Kelso entering, "how has I have you have Raphara I have your

late I am; really, my dear Barbars, I beg your pardon, but it seems I am not the worst offender," and she chattered on good-naturedly until the girl had recovered her lost composure, but Quentin stood before a window, gnawing his moustache and inwardly anathematising her for her most inopportune arrival. He had no chance of further speech with her that evening; the next day, too, he was singularly unfortunate; all the morning Stafford hovered about her, the afterthe morning Stationd hovered about her, the atter-moon was zent in entertaining friends and in the evening he and his host dined at Hollytor. The lad was in the highest spirits, although he refused to fouch a card, saying ingenucualy,— "Look here, Craven, personally I have no dis-like to the play, as you know; but Barbara dees not anyway graphing in the middest form and

not approve gambling in the mildest form, and I'm going to please her if I die for it." Craven's eyes emitted a flash of light; it was

gone in a moment (not, however, before Quentin had seen it) then he said quietly,— "Please yourself, Lane, it is perfectly imma-terial to me; and Miss Barbara is not a lady to be triffed with. I only hope she will not deny me your friendship when you and she are one."

Quentin's heart stood still, to beat with violent relief as Stafford answered modestly,—
"You take too much for granted, old fellow,

haven't even had courage to ask her yet; but I shall do so before she leaves."

How hot it was indoors! The young barrister stepped outside, but he could hear all that

"You know, Craven, she isn't like an ordinary woman, and sometimes I fear she regards me as a harmless boy; do you think," wistfully, "there

is any hope for me?"
"I should imagine so, you are a very eligible parti," cynically, "but Branscombe is gone over her too, and she may not guess the state of his finances.

"Oh, look here. You don't mean it, of course—but that's a sort of double insult. Barbara wouldn't value a fellow a fig more for his possessions, and Quentin is a jolly good fellow. You may be mistaken."

may be mistaken."
"I am not; question him as to his feelings if you do not believe my judgment;" then he passed

out of hearing but his heart was heavy. All that Craven had said was absolutely true; he had next to nothing to offer Barbara, and yet he loved her, and his friend was his rival. Would she let Stafford's possessions influence her decision ? Was there not a sort of treachery in wresting her from his host? What should be do? Must he always be silent after saying so much ! spent a miserable hour in the gardens, then Stafford came out to search for him; he was in his most hilarious mood, and clapping Quentin on the shoulder, cried,-

"Let us be off at once, we are to be out with guns before seven to morrow morning; I am going to show Barbara I am not unworthy her encouragement-deuce take it, old fellow, how glum you look! Craven, isn't he the picture of a rejected suitor? No, hang it! I didn't mean that," as he saw his friend's face change, "but you do look hipped. Let us get back to the

Craven walked with them to the gates, chatting

amusingly,—
"I don't for a moment suppose," he remarked at parting, "that you two fellows will turn up to-morrow, but I shall be at the entrance of Dan's Gully to meet you."

"We shall not fail you," cried Stafford gaily,

and so they parted, Craven returning to the house, the friends walking almost in utter silence towards Redmond Hall, Outside, by common consent, they paused. With great confusion Outside, by common Stafford asked

" Is it true that you love Barbara?"

Quentin flushed angrily, but after a moment's pause answered, -

"I would reply to that question only to you-

it is so—but I have very little hope."

"Well, we will not quarrel about it—only give me a fair chance, Branscombe, I mean to speak to her to-night. If she says no—then take your innings—but—but I think I would rather we did not see each other for awhile-if she says yes to you.'

"Very well, it shall be as you wish," and then they went in, but a servant named Bateson, overhearing them muttered,—

"Well, gentry have queer ways; why me and Gowers fought like tigers over Ninnie Beckett and the best man got her. Here's luck to Mr. Stafford, though the lady is over old for him."

That night Stafford was awaiting Barbara in the

hall, and as he gave her her candle he said

inrriedly,—
"I have been trying to pluck up courage to
speak to you for days dear; there is something I nust tell you-don't you guess it? I love you so much, my darling.

And there she interrupted him .-

"Stafford, think what you are saying. This is all so very strange and sudden, and I am so much your senior in feeling and experience if not in years; dear cousin, let us be friends, we have een so happy."

"You mean," blankly "that there is another fellow you prefer to me! Is it Branscombe?" he asked, wretchedly. Her face flushed, whitened,

"You should not have asked that—but—but it is true."

With a groan he turned away.

I was a conceited ass to believe I could win you; Quentin Branscombe is infinitely more worthy you, but I do love you, upon my soul I do, Barbara, and so, I shall even bear to see you sappy with him.

She caught the sound of a groan that was well nigh a sob, and followed him quickly.

"Stafford I do not leave me thus, I never meant to hurt you; I am sorry, oh, most sorry; but you are so young, I thought of you as a boy, rgive me, let me ge away."
He caught her hands in his.

"There is nothing to forgive dear love. I have been feelish and vain, but—but it is over now. Only if you would kiss me once," he paused, looked at her with grey, boyish eyes shining through his tears. She lifted her mouth to his. "God bless you dear," then he went slowly upstairs. That was the last time she ever looked on his loving face.

#### CHAPTER III.

BATESON saw the young men start the following morning, Stafford looking woe-begone and wholly unlike himself; Quentin very stern of face and manner. They had hardly left the house behind. when the former said,

"It is all over with me, old chap; I risked everything last night, and lost. It is your turn now, and I hope that I shall be able to see your

happiness without a touch of envy. He offered his hand as he spoke, but Quentin the ordered his hashes belong, the type did not glance at him as he grasped it, for he knew the boyish eyes were full of tears. The frank young face quivering with emotion. Arriving at Dan's Gully they saw nothing of Balph, and Quentin, anxious to divert his friend's attention. tion from his trouble, proposed they should go in opposite directions, when there would be little chance of missing Ralph supposing he had re-

membered his ongagement.

Stafford agreed; indeed, he felt unfit for any receisty save his own then; and there was something very like hate in his heart as he thought of the prize his friend had stolen from him. He ed carelessly through the wood, regardless that the brambles came into closer contact with his loaded rifle than was quite safe. In the distance he heard an occasional shot, but

he saw no sign of Ralph, and only a labouring man passed him on his way. Now the wood grew very silent, neither voice nor step could be heard, how dreary it all was, what a fool he had been to come? He hated solitude at all times, but more than ever now, so he lifted his voice and cried thrice "Craven!" but receiving no reply, began to retrace his steps.

Suddenly through the stillness of the early morning, came the sound of two shots fired in quick succession, one followed by a sharp, awful, cry as of one in mortal agony, then a dead still ness, next, the rushing of feet amongst the ness, next, the rushing of feet amongst the brambles, and the vision of one flying for dear A little later, the labouring man, returning from his errand to a neighbouring farm, encount-tered Mr. Ralph Craven, who asked if he had heard anything to give him alarm. "Yes," he answered, "I didn't like the sound of them quick shots, and it 'pears to me some one cried out like as they were in pain."

Mr. Craven, manifestly agitated, caught him by the sleeve. "Come with me, man, I am afraid there has been some terrible accident. My friends had planned to have a little early shooting. I was to join them, but was too late. From which direction

do you think the reports came?"
"From the water-edge, sir;" and they started to run, neither spoke again, until they chanced upon an open glade, when Craven, pausing, ejacu-lated, "Great Heaven! what has happened?" for prone upon the ground by Stafford, the blood ozing from a terrible wound. And beside him knelt Quentin Branscombe. Hearing voices, the latter looking up quickly said, -

"Thank God you have come; there has been a fearful accident. Craveo, I am afraid poor

Lane is dead.

" Dead ! for the love of Heaven, no ! How did it happen, were you with him? Here, you fellow, run for Doctor Markswood, but tell no one your errand on the way for fear the news should reach Miss Lane. Branscombe, I never was a coward until now. Perhaps it is the thought of Essie makes me weak. I cannot bear to look at bim. How shall I tell her the truth? Speak, man, how did he come by his douth?"

"I know no more than you; we had separated.

and I thought all was right until I heard an awful cry, and guided by it made my way here. I can only conclude that he was carrying his gun carelessly, and that the trigger was accidentally pulled back by the brambles—poor Stafford," and it was with difficulty he refrained from the

It was such a terrible thing to see him lying there senseless, breathless, rigid, who but an hour ago had been full of lusty life.

Alas! alas! it did not need the verdict of Marlswood to tell Quentin his friend would never rise again; that for him the end was reached, ere the journey had grown too wearisome, the burthen of the day too great.

In almost utter effence a rade litter was constructed, and upon this they laid the pror bruised body serrowfully, heavily conveying it homewards.

At the Hall, breakfast was ended : Barbaks more serious than was her wont stood by a window which commanded a view of the drive and the ragged road beyond.

Suddenly she started, her eyes dilated, and her breath came flutteringly from between her parted

ips.
What was it she saw? What was the burthen hiden from sight, which had all but reached

"How quiet you are," cried Essie, rising to in her, when she wheeled round suddenly, and catching her cousin by the waist said,-

"Come with me to my room; I have some-thing to show you in the way of photos," but her voice had a laboured sound which Essie was quick to hear, and her face was white as the linen collar which encircled her elender throat.

What is it, "There is something the matter. Bab 1 I will see."

No, no," entreated Barbara, "do not look not yet—I will detail all that passes faithfully to you. Essie, dear, be ruled by me; go away a little while. I am afraid there has been an

But like most weak people Besic could be very wilful upon occasion; now twisting herself out of Barbara's embrace, she said,—

"I am not a child, and will not be treated like one. It is my right and my duty to know all that has occurred—oh, Bab," as the selemn little procession entered the gates, "what is it? Who I am afraid," then as her quick, long-sighted eyes recognised Ralph and Quentio, she uttered a piercing cry "I bis Stafford!" and rushed from the hours followed by Ralph and Commissions of the bound of the stafford of the piereing ory "It is Stafford?" and rushed from the house followed by Barbars, who scarcely could keep pace with her flying feet. Seeing them, Doctor Mariwood advanced rapidly and catching Essie by the arm, said

firmly,—
"Miss Lane, you must go back; this is no scene." for you; let me give you into your cousin's care."
"No, no, no," she protested. "Doctor, where "No, no, no," she protested. "Doctor, where is my brother? Is that he, lying there beneath your coats? and-and-is he awfully hurt?" her wild eyes met his in agonised entreaty, for slight and shallow as Essie was, Stafford was very dear lo ber

"There has been an accident," Ralph said, advancing, "dear Esse, listen to Muriswood and go back with Miss Earbara," but the girl caught a glimpse of one white, falling hand, and shriek-

Stafford ! Stafford ! Oh. he is dead ! " looked wildly round, then breaking into almost maniacal laughter, flung herself on Eurbara's breast. The nurse held her fast while her deep eyes

met Quentin's so haggard and full of misery.
"Help me to get her in," she said; and as

Ralph advanced, added quickly, -"Not you," hardly understanding what impelled her to speak in such a fashion, and adding quickly,-

"It is your right, but waive it for her sake; too great kindness would be hurtful to her now," and Ralph, with a deep bow, fell once more in the Tenr.

Oh, that terrible day; when Essio alternately sobbed and laughed, shricking on Stafford, agon-ising the hearts of these who heard; when that still form lay in the great solenm chamber, and the white face lately so instinct with joy, was upturned with a look of pain frozen upon it for

But for Barbara, the whole house would have been disorganised; she, although so white and wan, shed never a tear and issued all necessary orders in the calm, level tones which compelled obedience.

Truly her training stood her now in good

Marlawood at his first brief examination had given it as his opinion that Stafford's death was due to his own carelessness; but a second and more exhaustive examination proved to him concharively that he had been either foully mur-dered or accidentally shot by another; it was

impossible for him to inflict such a wound upon

Then other medical men were called in, the result being that an inquest was considered necessary, and a fresh horror awaited those who loved the dead lad.

Esaie was now seriously ill; unable to receive even her lover, who was unremitting in his inquiries and attentions.

A dreadful gloom hung over the house, for the dead lad was beloved of all; no deep affection for any save Stafford had over awayed Essie's challow nature; no fierce passion stirred the current of her life save this yearning for revenge upon the murderer.

She made Barbara tell her all that passed at the inquest, although the details were terrible.

they suspect no one !" she cried, grasp ing her cousin's hands in hers that so burned and trembled.

"I am afraid they do," answered Barbara, with

white averted face.

"Afraid!" echoed Essie, "then it is someone for whom you have liking, if not love. Who is he! Tell me," and she sate erect with glittering eyes, all her long fair hair tumbling about her

flushed cheeks in dishevelled masses. "Suspicion falls on Mr Branscombe; but you and I know he could not have done it. Oh, Essie, do not you array yourself against him."

"He was the last to be seen with him; and they both loved you," muttered the girl. "Where is Quentiu Branscombe ! He must not be lost sight of-if he murdered Stafford, nothing but his death will satisfy me. Barbara, you cannot mean that you are his partisan—your father and mine were brothers—the same blood is in our veins-we have common cause against the man who has eaten our bread, sheltered beneath our

You shall not assume his guilt," Barbara interrupted, in a low passion-stirred voice ; loved Stafford as a brother-he has not the bearing of a guilty man; neither does he act as one. Under such changed circumstances he folt how impossible it would be to continue your guest.

"So he has taken refuge in hight," succred

"No; he has decided to remain at The Rose and Crown until the enquiry is ended," answered

ber cousin coldly.

"He believes it better policy to brave it outthere Bab, you shall not quarrel with me about him: I am all alone in the world save for Aunt Kelso (she utterly forgot her lover) and she is no support or help; for Stafford's sake stay with me—I am lost in the maze of my griefs;" and then as she began turbulently to sob and plead,

Barbara said quietly,—
"I will remain with you conditionally; you must obey my orders with regard to yourself, and you must speak no word against Mr. Brans-combe in my bearing; until he is proted guilty at least believe him innocent."

# CHAPTER IV.

Tus funeral duly took place; Ralph and Barbara being amongst the mourners; Rasse was prevented by ill-health from attending, and of course Quentin was not numbered with those

But he stood at a short distance from the open vault whilet the last sad rites were performed, and the brief glimpse Burbara had of his face

went sharply to her heart.

He had grown haggard and harassed, his eyes were sunken and he seemed weighed down by the burthen of suspicion under which he lived and laboured.

Idle tongues had been wagging; here a word was gathered, and there a supposed clue; it was known that the young man's goings and comings were under the supervision of the police, and this alone convinced the rustic mind of his guilt.

Barbara hated herself that she could think so much of him at such a time, and as she took her seat in the library amongst the mourners she tried vainly to thrust him from her mind.

The family solicitor after a few brief words of sympathy to Essie, who lay white and wan upon a couch, prepared to read her father's will second time-it had never dawned upon Stafford there was need to alter it one jot or tittle; not that he could have changed its most important clauses if he would—and with a great throb of terror Barbara realised that Essie was mistress of a large fortune and rich ostates.

She flashed one troubled glauce at Ralph Oraven; his face was impassive, blank as a mask—but the awful thought which had come to her with lightning speed, almost deprived her of sense and breathing.

She must get away—she was choking—air!
air!—and then before they had time to notice
her pallor or agitation, she had outwardly her pallor or agitation, she had outwardly recovered her normal condition, thanks to the sharp discipline of the hospital days.

With what patience she could, she waited for the times when, released from her duties she could escape into the open for reflection, and to regain something of her lost strength.

It was a clear evening with a suspicion of frost and not yet dark, when she walked rapidly away from the Hall, with head downbent and madly beating heart.

She felt she must see Quentin, she could not est until she had shared with him all the trouble that possessed her.

She knew that he loved her; he had told her that in a thousand little ways, and remembering his halting speech which Aunt Kelso had so inopportunely interrupted, she resolved that woman's pride should not stand between her lover and herself.

Out on the roadway, she set her face towards the village, but she had not far to go, for pres-ently from out the shadows cast by the trees, loomed a figure she recognised as Quantin's.

He would have passed her with a bow, but she stayed him by a gesture which was all but imperial in its command.

Mr. Branscombe; have you so many friends

that you would discard me! "Friends!" he echoed, "Friends!" he echoed, bitterly, "do I look like a man overburdened with blessings? Miss

Lane, there is such folly in beating about the bush—why should I mines matters?—I am a suspect, every movement of mine is watched even now whilst you talk with me, 'the man in blue' hovers near. I would not harm you, Heaven knows-and I do not think it well you

should be seen conversing with me."
"I came out solely to see you," she answered,
yery calmly, for all that her heart beat so madly. 'I am as sure of your innocence as I am of my own; but let us get out into the open, where the spy can find no cover—I want to talk to you and what I say must not be overheard—the time is not ripe—and it is all surmise as yet—I have no proof—not even facts to go upon—but my instinct warns me who is the guilty man-you shall hear and judge for yourself-let us strike out for the moor.

So long as they traversed the road they were not safe, for the bushes which ran along either side made good coverts for an eavesdropper, but mee on the open moor no one could approach them unseen.

Suddenly Barbara flashed upon her companion with the question-

Well, have you no reason to suspect some

"No," he answered heavily, "I am wholly at fanib.

" Did you never think of Ralph Craven?

He started back, staring at her as if he thought

her demented.

"He was not near the spot. You forget he came in answer to my call; and he was poor Stafford's chief friend. I was often jealous of his influence over him; then too he was soon to become the poor lad's brother by marriage "
And that marriage is at the root of all this

horror," she answerd in the same quick impressive tones. "From the first I have felt convinced Halph Craven had no real affection for Essie, and wondered why, this being so, he should wish to marry her, seeing she was poorly dowered. To-

day I understand. By her brother's death she becomes possessed of everything. As Stafford showed no inclination to naturally remove himself from the path to Craven's desires, unnatural

means must be employed—"
"Barbara! This is dreadful! I feel I wrong the man in listening to such an awful accusation

and you have no ground for such an idea--'
"I will trust to my instinct in this matter; you will say I have always disliked himyou will say I have siwary distinct Aim—best not to mention names—that is true, but I am not blinded by prejudice; you must not, shall not think that; only I have got just the clue I wanted. For your own sake help me to bring home this man's crime to him."

"I have lost hope, I think," said Quentin. "I cannot see a ray of light through the darkness, and even if you convince me of Craven's guilt, could you rows are innecessed to charge I fixed.

could you prove my innocence to others? It is all over with me, Barbara, there is no future of any worth before me. I had hoped one day to win fame and happiness, but hope is dead, since when I leave hore, I go dishonoured."

"You shall not regard your case as hopeless," she cried passionately. "Quentin, if not for your own sake at least for mine—"
"Hush!" he interrupted housely, "that too

is past; you are lost to me."

"Not lost, only drawn nearer to you by your vast need. This is no time for reticance. Quantin,

give me the right to fight for you."
"You mean," he said, in dazed fashion, "you mean you love me; that now, when I am under so heavy a cloud you cling to me, believing in me, holding me dear-

" More than ever dear. Did not you guess? Did not you care to know !

Her head drooped in sudden abasement, she could say no more, but he stirred to the soul, took those strong, white, helpful hands in his,

"My darling Barbara, I must not take so great a gift from you. Would it be any proof of my love to bid you share my shame?"

"It would be a sign of your faith in me. Quentin, you did your best to win my heart; you know if you have succeeded; is it fair to me now to cast me saide as a child throws a broken toy aside † Bid me work for you and I will work, I will die if need be to prove you guildess, but I will not take back what I have given."

"Barbara! Barbara!" and as slowly he drew her to him, he felt strengthened for the fight he knew awaited him; the kiss she gave him lend him hope; the whispered words of love carried comfort to his anxious heart.

And yet was it wise or generous to accept all her life, to link it to his so shadowed and stained? "Sweetheart," he said, after that brief pause, "I am not man enough to resist your entres or forego your love; but thank heaven I have strength left to say that never till I stand free from suspicion will I call you wife."

"Thus you hamper me, but I will not com-ain. Only—only—if just because I love you so dearly, be careful for yourself. Craven; at the inquest, all his evidence which seemed to be for you, went against you; when you are alone recall it, and you will then not think my statement so outrageous or absurd. Now let us go home, walk with me to the gates; we must be careful not to be charged with conepiracy, and whatever comes, dear love, let nothing teach you doubt of my loyalty."

I would as soon doubt the goodness of Heaven

At the gates they parted, Barbara going at

Act the gates they parted, parted, agoing acones to her own apartments, and Quentin returning (shadowed of course) to the village ins.

In the morning all Redmond was active with the news that Mr. Branscomb had been arrested for the murder of Stafford Lane. White as death grew Barbara, but her lip never quivered, and the light in her eyes shone steadily, as she said —

"This is the beginning of the end; the fight will be cruel, but please Heaven it will be brief," and Essie looking at her full of wonder and pain,

Bab, you will not 'stick' to him still. Ob, Bab ! Bab ! if only I could hear you say you do not love him I should be so much more content and she weakly began to cry.

"Essie, you may as well learn the truth at once." Barbara answered in measured tones, "when this trial is over and Mr. Branscomb set above suspicion, we shall be married."
"Oh! this is too dreadful—how can you!—and in Stafford's house!" began Essie, when her

cousin interrupted swiftly .-

cousin interrupted swiftly,—
"Tell me to go, and I will; it is only by your
own wish I have remained so long. If you feel
that I am wronging you or yours do not scruple
to say so; I am sure if Stafford could give me a
sign he would bid me stay, for he loved and
trusted Quentin, even though other friendships
for a little while made him appear for settin—he for a little while made him appear forgetful-he would say that my duty as well as my privilege is to defend and help the man whose wife I shall one day be.

"If you will cut your own throat who shall stay you?" asked Essie, still in tears, "but I won't quarrel with you. Forget my words, and so long as we can, let us cling together, for after quarrel with you. all, Bab, we are cousins, and friendless girls to

So Barbara stayed and the trial came on; it was soon elicited that both the murdered lad and Quentin had been suitors for Miss Lane's that there had been some jealousy and even estrangement between them in consequence; fiwas wrested from Barbara that on the night preceding her cousin's death he had proposed and been rejected. Ralph Craven testified to Quentin's gloom when their mutual friend had spoken of his hopes, and stated that he believed there had been some slight quarrel between them, but he certainly did not suspect the prisoner of violence, still less of murder.

Then Bateson again recalled, told how the young men had left the Hall together on that fatal morning, both looking "as unlike themfatal morning, both looking "as unlike them-selves as possible, and evidently at loggerheads." The evidence against the prisoner was purely circumstantial, but it convinced the public generally, and although after several adjournments, the jury mercifully gave Quentin the benefit of the doubt, he went out into the world practically a ruined man, for their verdict was

not proven.

# CHAPTER V.

"It is all over with me," he said, desperately to Barbara, as under the darkening sky they met to say farewell; "no matter where I go this thing of which I stand charged, will follow and hamper me at every step. I must give up my profession, not only because no one would now employ me, but because to live I must earn a pittance; my ancle has withdrawn my small allowance, and I am practically a beggar, consequently, dear heart, I give you back your freedom. I dare not ask you to share a life of shame."

Steadily she looked into his eyes, all fears and

remore now forgotten.

"When I gave you my heart, did you imagine I would ever take it back again; that my love must fade when the first storm lowered. Oh, Quentin, how little and how poorly you have understood me. Hush! I know that say all this is for my sake; I know that you are prempted only by generous and honourable instincts, but what if I prefer a life of shame with you, to one all glory with another? It shall not be written of me that I could not watch with you through your night of sorrow—if you are penniless I have enough and to spare for both. Quentin, take it all, and do not drive from your side your truest friend."

Her hands were clasped about his neck; her deading eyes so full of love and confidence,

beamed tenderness upon him.

Barbara, you make me weak; is it well el My beloved, if I accepted all you offer well might men cry treble shame on me-ab, no, dear heart! this only will I do-hope for the blessed day to come when, without a stain upon my reputation, I may claim you mine; my wife by reputation, a may claim you mine; my wate. I will not make you, though all my heart cries out for you; neither will I hold you bound to me in any way. You are free to choose another love—I should not blame you, although there will never be but one woman in all the world to

She sought to shake his determination, but vainly; guessing how poorly he was provided with this world's goods she endeavoured to thrust her gifts upon him; but by nature he was proud, and his recent troubles had added not a little to the strength of his character, so that utterly refused her assistance, announcing his intention of going to London there to seek employment.

You will write often," he said, as he held close. "Your letters will be the casis in the her close. desert; oh, love, dear love, the waiting will be

long and cruel

But it will have an end. Until then let us try to live in hope," and so with words of love and benediction she sped him on his way.

Essie waited her in her own apartments, she was still looking very frail, and not all Ralph's blandishments could restore the little lady to her old bright self. As Barbara sank wearily into a chair, she dropped on her knees beside her saying,-

You need not tell me anything. You have said good-bye to-to the one who is nameless. You heavy-hearted and it is brutal for me to inflict myself and my woes upon you at such a time, and yet I must. Barbara, it is impossible for me to stay here, equally impossible for Aunt Kelso and I to travel from place to place alone we are incapables-there is an alternative it is true-that is that I marry Raiph at once and so

find a natural protector."
"Has Mr. Craven proposed this solution of the difficulty, Essie?"

Yes; you are aware how devotedly he loves me, and he protests I am too young to be left wholly to Auntie's care. He suggests that we should be married without delay and unnecessary fuss-I don't wish to wear my fetters yet, but,

on the other hand-

"Essie, I wonder Mr. Craven should propose such a scandalous thing. Would you do dis-honour to Stafford's memory by clutching so greedily at your own happiness? This haste is unseemly, indecent. I wonder that you could syen listen to such pleading," she had started up now, and was pacing the room with flushed cheeks and dilated eyes. Believing what she did, she could not contemplate such a step Essie spoke of without a thrill of horror, Should this weak little woman who, with all her weakness so truly loved the dead lad, give herself wholly and forever into his murderer's keeping? No, no, a thousand times no; she would do anything to save her from such an awful fate. What could she do? awful fate. What could she do? E-sie's voice broke on her reverie.

"I told you, Bab, that I would rather remain free a little longer, but Ralph bothers me so, and gets angry with me sometimes when I urge delay ; now, if you would stay with me, I could manage well enough. You are an accomplished traveller, and it would be delightful to go from place to place with you. If only you would relinquish your stupid profession."

Barbara veered round suddenly,

Barbara veered round suddenly,—
"I will do even that conditionally, I will be
your guide, your companion, anything you will,
provided that you promise faithfully to postpone
your wedding for six months. That will give us
time for thought and action, you will know your
own heart better. For indeed, Essie, marriage is not an act lightly to be done-and-and little cousin, for all Stafford's loving kindness you owe him a tribute of remembrance and regard.

"Well," remarked Essie, almost blithely, Ralph must wait for me; of course he will be desperately miserable, equally, of course, he will scold me, but I shall thrust all the blame upon your shoulders, and as I fancy he is rather afraid of

you that will not hurt you. When can we start? To-morrow,—the next day,—when, when?"
"Not for a month, at least. I have instructions to leave behind, and many small matters to settle, beside all this, Essie, I want to make an investigation upon my own account; to be frank with you, it is as much for my lover's sake as yours, that I have resolved to forego my old life, and to remain in touch with Redwood and its people. Ask no questions! I am fighting alone and

against long odds, but with Heaven's help I will vindicate Quentin from being Stafford's murderer, (for he was murdered, no chance shots did that diabolical deed), to his just doom. I shall you see you a happy wife, Essie, but I do not think that you will ever bear the name of Craven.

"You frighten me with these mysterious looks and words. Be your old self, Bab; let us go away and forget everything, everybody; all the tragedy of the past few weeks, and, and even Stafford, for at night, when I lie thinking of him, I grow afraid. But oh! what a dreadful reckening there will be with Ralph, poor old boy," and then she drifted into chatter upon other subjects, whilst Barbara brooded upon all that was over, all that might chance, and her heart was sick with longing for Quentin, and the fear that never any more could he hold up his head among honourable men.

When the news was broken to Ralph he was when the news was rosen to keep the was furious, tracing Barbara's influence throughout; but he had the wit to hide his auger. So, urgently pleading with Essie that he was by right her proper guardian, her brother's dearest friend, that it showed a sort of distruct of him to treat him thus cavalierly, that the little lady very nearly broke her promise to her cousin, perhaps would have done so quite but for one besty re-mark her lover made. "You were willing to be my wife without delay until Barbara Lane coaxed you into her way of thinking. If you were not very foolish you would see that she has her own ends to serve," and, like most rather silly people, Essie had a very comfortable opinion of her acumen and foresight. So she briefly replied that she would be married when she liked or not at all. That was a very bitter pill for Craven to di subsequent events proved too plainly. He had spoken openly of his marriage as all but an estabshed fact, but the days grew into weeks, and still Miss Lane declared that she should be Miss Lane for ever and ever so long," and those who knew her best said she was always given to change, so that most probably she had wearied of Craven, and, having now a substantial fortune, thought to do better for herself.

Then strange folks began to appear at Hollytor; the gossipping servants gave out that summons and writs were being served upon the master, that tradesmen were daily arriving and angrily demanding payment of their just claims.

demanding payment of their just claims.

Of course these rumours could not fail to reach Essie at last, and she grew troubled. She had never loved Ralph, it would cause her small regret to part from him, but she hated to be made ridiculous, and even threatened her favourite maid with dismissal, when she ventured to say that Mr. Craven had wanted only her money. Essie was vain, and this seemed a slight upon her beauty, so she made reply sharply.—

beauty, so she made reply sharply,—
"I was engaged to Mr. Craven when I had hardly anything of my own."

"True, Miss," retorted the gul, who was the daughter of an old tenant, "but he knew you'd get everything if Mr. Stafford died first.

Essie drew her breath, sharply, those random words had set her thinking, but she was afraid to dwell upon the thought, so she sent away the girl, and then she spent a long, long while in brooding, which was unusual in her. Not a word did she say ! Barbara of her purpose, but before she went to bed she wrote a letter to Ralph say ing she did not feel able to fulfil a promise bastily given, so she begged him to release her; she hoped he would forgive her and find happiness with someone more worthy his affection than she But vacillating by nature she had ever been. But vacillating by nature she delayed sending the note until the morrow, when the awakening came indeed.

A respectable man called at the Hall inquiring

for Miss Lane, and when Essie gave him audience, told her briefly that he was a tailor in a small way of business, that Mr. Craven owed him twenty pounds which was much more than he could afford

"He had promised to settle the account the preceding week, saying he was about to marry a rich lady who had promised to meet all claims

against him.
"Was it true that Miss Lane was about to become Mrs. Craven? He had called at Hollytor

but had not been admitted to the mester's

At this point Essie sharply rang the bell, and a

servant appearing, said, - x Go at once to Hollytor and ask Mr. Craven to come to me without delay;" then, with a little bow to the anxious tradesman, "in the meanwhile I will see that you have refreshments brought to

you; and if your claim is just, your complaint to you and if your claim is just, your complaint true, you need not fear that you will suffer."

Then she went to Barbara. He was made very comfortable, and did not ind the time of waiting long. But he felt very grieved for Essie when also veryone.

Her face was white save for an angry spot upon either cheek, and her eyes were hard; only her voice was courteous as she said,—

of am sorry to tell you that Mr. Craven has secretly left Hellytor, and the builds are now in possession. I deny that there is any engagement between us; that is all past, and I hape you will contradict any report you may hear to the contrary. As for your account that must be settled

'No," he said quickly, "I will not let you pay;

it is so unfair."

"I can affird to lose so small a sum," she answered, not unkically, "and in this matter I will please myself:" Being a will little lady she

## CHAPTER VI.

Despty morrifled at this revelation of Ralph's true character, Essie was now only too eager to get away from Redmond Hall, and would have hurried their departure, only Barbara held her to her agreement. She was not to be moved either by entreaties or angry remenstrances.

Every day she took long and solitary walks, the object of which she never divulged to any; and, as Essic remarked, behaved so mysteriously, that she "might have been a detective on the trail of a criminal." But she asked no questions because, although she was genuinely fond of her cousin and regarded her as a very tower of strength, she stood somewhat in awe of her.

So Barbara came and went as she pleased, and between her and her companion Quentin's name

was never spoken.
The last day of their stay at Redmond arrived. and Barbara started earlier than usual for her walk, for now the afternoons were short, and there was something uncanny about the wood in the glosming.

She was neither nervous nor superstitious, but since Stafford's death, she certainly did not like to loiter in the solitary place where he had been found, and whither her walks always tended.

As she entered now, the solitude and gloom oppressed her painfully, but this was the last chance she would have for weeks of doing any thing towards proving Quentin's innocence, and she must not lose it.

She had an old fancy that here, where Stafford was murdered, she would find some clue to the 'a identity; not even the fact that skilled officers had searched vainly for some such

taken could shake that idea. She went with drouped head and dark eyes scarching the grassy ways, peering through the intricacies of brambles, keenly scanning every little heap of fallen leaves. But all her searching seemed vain, and she sighed as she stood by the

water edge, looking into its brown depths.

Was there neither help nor hope for Quentin?
Must the ghest of another man's crime stand

always between them ?

She turned to go, and in turning stumbled against a stone; the weather had been unusually wer, and the stone was easily shifted from its place, a little earth being removed with it.

she drew herself erect Barbara uttered a low cry which held a world of triumph in it. She had got her clue; beneath the stone there sparkled and glittered a solitaire of curiously wrought gold, set with a single emerald.

She pounced upon it, hardly daring to believe her good fortune ; her breath came hard and fast, uses seemed to swim ; this was one of a pair she had seen Ralph Craven wearing; he had been

very proud of them, saying they were an heirloom and he would rather lose any treasure than these, for with their loss his luck would go.

She remembered, too, that after Stafford's death she had never seen them upon him. How blind she had been not to connect this fact with the

ob, poor Stafford!" she thought, sadly, much too well you trusted him!" And " how much too well you trusted him ! then she cast about in her own mind how the dreadful deed had been done, and how Craven had escaped detection.

Well, there had been no struggle, that was evident. Doubtless the assassin had stolen up behind, and flown in the opposite direction when he heard Quentin's hurrying feet. four exits to the wood, he could easily escape by that to the south, make a short circuit and reenter by the east. It was close by the east entrance that Craven had accested the labourer.

Arranging these facts rapidly in her own mind, arbara had no longer any vestige of doubt as to Craven's guilt. He had everything to gain by Stafford's death, provided it could be compassed

without discovery.

It had not been the outcome of sudden mad passion, but a deliberately planned, deliberately She looked down at the glittering bauble in her

open palm, saying aloud,-I will never rest until I have brought him to justice, surely with such a clue as this the police cannot fail to bring home his guilt to him."

Even as she spoke she was roughly caught by the shoulder, the solitare almost jerked from her hold, and the wicked face of Ralph Craven was so close to here that she felt his breath upon

"Give it up," he said, in a flaree whisper, "it is mine;" but she clenched her hand and answered as steadily as the shock and fright she had endured would allow her. that legally it is yours; but I will die rather than restore it to you—its possession means salvation to Quentin Eranscombe—you best know what it means for you. Let me go you are hurting me."

" I will release you when you give me my own. It can have no value for you beyond that of

money.

She interrupted him swiftly.

"It is of even greater value to me than you can guess; it means the happiness of two lives; but being a woman I suppose I am foolishly pitiful. I—I do not think I could bear to have your blood upon my head. I will restore it to you on condition that you give me in return the fully-signed and attested confession of your murderous deed. I always suspected you, Ralph Craven."

"You are mad," he cried, great drops of sweat arting out upon his brow. "You think to clear starting out upon his brow. "You think to clear Branscombe at my expense; but I am not such a fool as to put myselfin your power, and to brand myself a murderer. Give me the solitare."

Not now-never, unless on my own conditions. I will grant you time to escape before I make use of your statement. I will even h you with money, if that is what you need. may trust me; I am not a woman lightly to break

my word."
"Nor I a man to be thwarted; misfortune has not made me more placable;" and, suddenly, without warning he caught her by the wrist, seek-

ing to force open the clenched hand.
She was slim but she was strong, and the thought of Quentin kept her brave. She struggled fiercely with him, swaying to and fro, resolved that nothing but death should wrest her trea-

"Quick!" menanced Ralph. "What is your strength against toine? Do you think I will die adog's death because of you! I will choke the

life out of your body first."

She lifted her voice then crying, "Help!" but before she could repeat the call, his cruel hand was upon her white throat, and as her eyes met his she read murder there. "Now, may Heaven his she read murder there. "Now, may He help me!" she prayed in her soul as help me!" brain reeled, her breath came in gasps, and her strength was all but gone. From the distance came the sound of rough laughter. With a super

human effort she wrenched herself free, shrieked

aloud once again, "Help!"
Then she heard the rush of heavy feet, saw as in a dream Ralph Craven rounding the pool, escaping by the south exit, as instinct told her once before he had done, and sauk down breathless upon the ground, faint and all but senseless. but she had still power to say to the two men who rushed to her rescue.

"Do not mind me ; follow and bring him

back."

They glanced nervously at each other. They were labourers, and their minds moved slowly; but each thought what little help fists were against firearms, which probably the fugitive

carried, and declined to obey Barbara's command.
"We're married men, an can't afford to run
no riek, miss," said one, "and there's the perlice to
look arter such as him; but we'll take you home

and welcome."

and welcome."
"But I tell you that he is Ralph Craven, the
man who murdered poor Mr. Lane, and would
have murdered me," she urged.
"Well, miss; if he've done them things the

more need for us to keep out o' his way; and

not an inch would either budge.

Barbara's whole soul rose in indignation at their timidity, and dragging herself to her feet,

Very well, I will follow him alone," but she forgot the struggle and horror through which she had passed had exhausted her strength, and almost fainting she fell back against a tree.

"There, miss, you see as how its no good try-ing to do anything jest now," said one of her rescuers, "have a sleep on it an' you'll say we couldn't do no other than we've done;" and sick to the soul she suffered them to lead her towards

At the gates, however, she dismissed them after a liberal donation, and contriving unassisted to walk to the Hall, entered the room where Essie and Kelso were sitting. They both cried out when they saw her dis-

arranged dress, her white face, and the awful

arranged dress, ner water threat, mark of fingers upon her threat.

She sank down upon a couch, Essie hurrying to her with wine, and asking hysterically, has happened."

For auswer Barbara unclosed her hand, displaying the solitaire.
"Do you recognise this, Essie?"

"Why, yes; it is one of a pair Ralph Craven used to wear." "And it proves to me that he murdered Staf-

ford, even as he would have murdered me but for timely assistance. Silence," as Essie began to scream, "will you

let him go free, or-

"No, no, no! Aunt, send Bateson for the police. Oh, Bab, Bab; but for you I might even now have been his wife."

Barbara felt a shock as Essie so readily gave her late lover to the mercy of the law true he deserved whatever followed, but once she had believed he loved her, had even professed to love him in return.

So she laid her hand upon the girl's, saying, "Wait until you have heard all my story before We must do nothing rashly."

But when she had told how from the first she suspected Ralph, because he alone could profit by Stafford's death—how she had patiently watched and waited for some sign, and finally discovered the solitaire, Essie would remain quiet no longer. finally discovered

It was she who summoned the police to aid, she who offered a liberal reward to the man who should capture Craven; and as the days went by bringing no success, advertised largely the description of the missing young man.

She had not charged him with the murder of her brother, but the assault on Barbara; only the police authorities as yet knew there was another

charge preferred against him.

The little family had left Redmond and gone to Milan, but Essie kept herself well acquainted with all that passed, and relied upon Barbara in every emergency, for truth to tell the little lady's vanity had received a cruel blow, and she was less sure and proud of her personal charms than she used to be, nor so easily flattered by the attentions of the opposite sex.

Barbara had forwarded the solitaire to Quentin; she felt it was upsafe in her keeping, for seemed ubiquitous to her; she was afraid he might appear at some unguarded moment and

wreat the jewel from her.

To her lover she had written,—

Find Craven and all else will be easy; I feel that that I now send you will be a forcible link in the chain of evidence against him, and that its possession may help you in the earch. In the care while let us live in hope; our sky is dark meanwhile let us live in hope; our sky is dark now, but behind the clouds the sun is shining, and soon we shall feel its warm rays."

# CHAPTER VII.

WEERS and months dragged wearily by, softening Essie's grief, but not her resentment; bringing very little hope or joy to Barbara and no good fortune to Quentin.

Left wholly to his own resources, thrown penniless upon a world which he felt bad used him ill, he had been compelled to forswear his profession, and to accept the first post that

offered.

It was but a poor one after all, but he was not in a position to be fastidious, and to live he must he even thought himself passing fortunate in obtaining the situation for which there had been so many aspirants, both young and old.

So he found himself occupying a stool in a third-rate solicitor's office, working long hours, living poorly and eating his heart out for love of Barbara, and the desire to stand a free and honourable man before those who had been so swift to condemn him.

He did not write often to Barbara; he had no good news to tell, why should he make her

more unhappy ?

By dint of greatest economy he contrived each week to set aside a small sum of money for future use; but it increased so slowly that he often said with a bitter laugh,—
"When I am an old man, and unable to work

any longer, I suppose the guardians will deny me relief, because I shall be in the receipt of two shillings weekly—that ought to be enough to keep a pauper's body and soul together."

By reason of her recent bereavement, Essie did not propose spending the season in town as Barbara had feared she would, but rested very well content in foreign cities, gathering about her little troup of admirers, only she said with a

sage shake of the head,—
"A burnt child dreads the fire, Bab, and I don't intend to listen seriously to one of them, until I am assured he is a rich man, and can afford to love me for myself alone.'

Of Ralph Craven nothing was definitely known; only it was an open scoret, that his influential friends and relatives had helped to smuggle him

away to a place of safety.

Little by little the truth oozed out; he was proclaimed a gambler, a man of most dissolute

habits, and utterly without principle.

He had more than once been on the eve of marriage with some unsuspecting heiress, when something had transpired to break off the coutract; and always when Mr. Ralph Craven left the scene of his last defeat, the landlord, neighbouring tradesmen and servants were robbed their just dues.

their just dues.

He was "wanted" by the innumerable dupes of his well laid schemes, and snave tongue, but he had vanished as completely as though he had never existed, and Essie said, with a vicious

haver existed, and assets said, while stamp of her little foot,—
"I hope I may never hear his name again; and it is so likely, Bab, that an eligible parti would not care to marry me, when he learned my name had once been linked with his."

In the early summer they returned to England taking up residence at St. Leonard's, and there, little by little, Essie discarded her mourning, blossoming again into frivolity—but the frivolity was regarded with lenient eyes, for she

pretty, rich, and good-tempered.

Once when the whole land lay thirsty under the sultry, cloudless sky, Barbara went to town,

and without a word of warning found her way

to Quentin's poor lodging.

The landlady, eyeing her askance said Mr.
Banham (the name by which he went) did not dine at home, but somewhere close to his office, she really could not say where; he never reached until seven, sometimes later.

Barbara hesitated a moment, for neither the woman's face nor manner was inviting; then browing pride to the winds, she said,-

"If you would let me share any room with you until he comes, I should be glad"-here she produced a sovereign—"I can leave by the mail. It is of the greatest importance that I should see him.

The woman clutched eagerly at the coin, and her manner changed from suspicious scrutiny, to abject fawning. The lady was very welcome to stay in Mr. Banbam's own room. It was quieter there than anywhere in the house (for all the other lodgers had children) and would she like a cup of tea and something to eat ?

"Just a cup of tea," said Barbara, as she followed her to Quentin's room; she felt it would be impossible to eat in such an atmosphere, and yet

he daily endured it—alas, poor Quentin!
With almost an air of pride the woman ushered her in, then went away to prepare the tea, so that Barbara was left free to examine her lover home. Home! was it possible that Quentin had been reduced to such straits as this; why the meanest labourer on the Redmond estate was better housed than this!

At the far end of the room stood a chair bed stead, partly concealed from view by a dirty chintz curtain, a table occupied the centre of room, whilst three chairs and a forlorn looking couch, made up a poor whole. The floor was carpet less, but across the fireplace was stretched a piece of cocoa matting in lieu of a rug. There were a few of Quentin's books scattered about ; the piace was so untidy, the furniture so covered with dust that when the landlady had brought up her and again departed, Barbara set to work with her handkerchief to win some semblance of clean-

It was nearly seven when she heard a slow step upon the landing and her heart began to beat upon the maning and her heart negar to beat fest. Quentin used to walk so rapidly, with such a blithesome tread, in the old days when joy was with them and love was young, Now, she caught her breath sharply for the handle turned, and then, in the open doorway, she saw her love aged, changed, all but shabby, with a look in his eyes which brought tears to her own. tanding in the shadow and he did not so much as see her until she said in a voice she vainly strove to make cheery, "Will not you come in and see what a metamorphosis I have brought

He staggered as though she had struck him, then, rushing forward, caught her to his breast,

"My love, my dearest love, what good impulse brought you here? Barbara! Barbara! am I dreaming or mad?" She could not answer; indeed, words were not

easy to either then, so great was their joy thus to be together again, all in all to each other.

Not until that first rapture had subsided, could Quentin think of his shabby surroundings, or Barbara remember the real reason of her visit. But, when they were seated side by side on

the much worn couch, he said,—
"My darling, you may judge for yourself what
progress I am making in the world, how vain it is for me to lift my eyes to you, or for you to wait until I have achieved something better."

"Hush," she interrupted, gontly, "your letters were so unsatisfactory I could not rest concent, so came myself to see the nakeduess of the land. Oh! my dear, my dear, how could you so suffer when you had but to breathe one little word of the truth to me to change all things Quentin, it breaks my heart to see you thus, there are grey threads in your hair, lines beneath your eyes, if you guessed how the look in them makes my heart ache you would not refuse me anything I ask. Give me your word."
"No blind promises, my darling," he broke in,
"I know all too well of what self-sac lifee you are

capable, and with God's belp I never will drag you down to my own miserable level."

The colour flamed into her cheek .

"Why will you always reverse our positions, making me the wooer? It is neither fair nor kind, Quentin. I have enough of my own to support us in comfort, until you have found other and more congenial work to do. As your wife I could better labour for you. If you will not let me share your lot here, at least in some other country where your misfortunes are not known, let me proudly lift my head as your helpmate."

He leosed her clinging hands from about his

I shall never reward your love and loyalty in such fashion," he answered with that new, firm strength which trouble had developed in him, "neither will I flee England as a criminal. Perhere I never shall stand free of stain, and it would be well if you could forget me. You are as beautiful as you are good my Barbara, and with another and more fortunate man, you may find hereigners. find happiness,"

"This from you! Oh, Quentin, how could you so study to wound me? Hear me, we perhaps shall not meet for many months, if now you send I have given you my heart for ever and ever; you may never regain what you have lost, but on the other hand you will never lose what you have won. In the sight of Heaven you are my husband, and as a loyal wife I will cleave to you whilst thought and life endures. Now for the last time, Quentin, do you bid me

Heaven help me, I must. There is nothing else left me as an houeurable man to do, I had never speken of my hope to you; I wish I had died before I had so entangled your deathny with mine. Barbara, my best and decreat, I have no alternative, no choice. I should be a brute to suatch you from honoir, luxury, afficwith auguish of heart, I bid you go."

"I shall obey," she answered heavily, "in so far as obedience does not mean falsehood to you; but you are meting out a very hard measure to me, and sending me back to Resic in a state of utter hopelseness. If you should repently our decision, if you should feel that life is all too hard to have without me, you will at least protince to send for roe, or if you should fall iil, and my heart misgives me."
"In such a case I will send for you," he inter-

rupted gently but firmly ; "now let me take you to the station, you must not loss your train. Riss me here -ub, my darling, it has been like a glimpse of heaven to see you and to listes to your voice ogain."

"Then why, oh why do you drive me away? Oh no need to repeat your facilish arguments; it know all you would say, and I will not listen. But (hore she blushed painfully) Queotin, you will as once remove from this place; I cannot bear to live in luxury whilst your surroundings are so terrible-share my purse-

"We have discussed that matter before, Barbara; we will not enlarge upon it now. Sweetes and dearest let me repeat your our words to you, that in them you may find con-fort—'Our sky is dark now, but behind the fort-'Our sky is dark now, but clouds the sun is shining, and soon we shall feel its warm rays."

"I had hope when I wrote them; now you have taken even that from me—oh, forgive me, Quentin, I ought not so to have spoken when you are so laden with trouble; I am a very Job's comfurter-

"You are the best and dearest woman on earth," he answered as he kissed her tenderly; but though he spoke cheerfully his heart was like lead as he went back to his somary room.

He had sent her from him, he could not regret doing so, he would not have her share the doing so, he would not have her same the thousand and one humblistions which fell to his lot, but the darkness was all the mero intensa for that brief flash of light—sold he would hope on—and as he locked at his little store he wowed that it should increase tenfold, because he intended devoting it to a re-investigation of the Lane

#### CHAPTER VINC

Working early and late (for he "kept" several tradesmen's books), spending his strength for a more pittance, cating his heart out with longing, loathing his sordid surroundings, yetunable to break away from them, that was Quentin's

It was infinitely harder, indescribably more bitter, even than Barbara could conceive.

But for the blessed knowledge of her love he never could have sustained the long and unequal fight; but with such a reward before him he would not yield, she should never blush to think that the man to whom she had given her heart was all unworthy the treasure.

The summer waned, autumn and winter brought their changes, a new year dawned on the old world, and a new spring began to make lovely the lanes and gardens, with the tender green of young leaves, the delicate bases of hardy flowers.

Essie had discarded her mourning, and her volatile soul was thirsting for pleasure; she fully intended to spend the coming season in town, being, as she lugubriously remarked "bored to death."

"I shall get into mischief," she added, with a sly glance at Barbara, "if we remain in this doleful place longer. I am not like you; I cannot occupy my time usefully, neither can I read the live-long day as Anut. Kelso does, so to Lendon we will go, and if the fates are kind I shall meet my Prince Charming and 'live happy ever after." The Challoners want to let their town house, and it is quite large enough for us, so hey! presto! I will see age it. What a perfectly levely prims! will have!"

Barbara raised no objection to the programme; in fact she was delighted with it, because, although moving in another sphere, she would be many opportunities of meeting and working with and for him.

When they were fairly settled in their new home, she wrote him begging him to spare her one evening; surely he need not always work like a galley-slave; and she appointed a place of meeting, knowing that he would not present himself at Essie's house whilst still under a ban.

The meeting was indescribably bitter at first, for the change in Quentin was very painful; he tooked years older, and the shabby clothes he had vainly endeavoured to make more presentable formed a criking contrast to Barbara's neat year rich costume.

"I ought not to have come," he said apologetically, "but I could not resist your entreaties; but my darling, it won't do for you to be seen with me, what would your fashionable friends say were they to meet you in my company?"

"I don't know," she answered with assumed lightness, "but I can soon learn. Can you meet me to morrow I We might walk the length of the row when it is most crowded. What say you to that !"

"No, decidedly; you have enough to hear for my sake already, without exposing yourself to cruel criticisms, and mock condolences."

"I think," said Barbara quietly, "I am able to hold my own; no one dare speak slightingly of you in my hearing, such as for condelences I do not need them. I am proud in the knowledge that the noblest man on earth holds me dear, and that not all his troubles have had power to quench his love."

The remainder of the evening was full of bliss; they spoke of the future with hope; they resolutely ignored all present obstacles, all present griefs; so that it was with almost a light heart Quentin returned to his poor room.

He indulged in the unaccustomed insury of a cigar, which he smoked meditatively by the open window, whilet he dreamt of a time when he and Barbara should meet to part no more.

It graw late. He flung the stump of his eigar into the street where it was pounced upon by an urchin with a shout of gice; then pulling down the dirty blind he turned to look for the little black box which contained his hoard. It stood in the old accustomed place, there was nothing in its appearance to startle him, so he drew it near with simost affectionate touch.

Nightly he counted that small store, for was it not to bring Barbara nearer? Now he placed it on the table before him, then suddenly a great tremor shook him. It was unlocked! He knew he had not left it so; what did it mean? He hardly dared to look—to raise the lid.

His breath came heavily, his head rected; then he tried to laugh off his fear, and with an effort of will opened it. Oh, merciful Heaven, it was empty! There was not one single coin, large or

He fell back in his chair like a dead man; he had been robbed, and Barbara was further off than ever; the vindication of his innocence was now impossible.

He was stupefied by his loss. All those long, long months of unceasing toil had been vain. Well, he must drift with the stream; Heaven's hand was heavy upon him, and it was vain to strive against fate.

Suddenly he started up, his eyes aflame, his face white and fierce with passion and pain; hurrying to the landledy's aparament he questioned sharply who had been seen to enter his room that day.

room that day.

She answered, "No one," and wished to know the reason for his agitation. When he told her she exclaimed,—

she exclaimed,—
"It's that blackguard, Murdoch, the man who had the next room to yours; he paid me his rent, an' left just a little afore tea-time. I thought as how he seemed flush o' meney; but it wasn't no business o' miné to ask how he came by it, an' as long as I get my own I don't grumble. But I'm sorry for yer, an' should jest advise yer to go to the perlice. It ain't a nice thing to happen in a respectable woman's house; an' I'll thank yor to make most pertikler inquiries, 'cause I've always paid my way as a honest woman should, an' I've brought up my fam'ly well," etc., etc.

Quentia did apply to the police, but the man Murdoch had wholly disappeared, and the little hoard was never recovered. Then he lost all hope.

Ha felt it was criminal to keep Barbara bound to him any longer; he would leave her free. Not without a fierce fight, not without a prayer for guidance, did he attain to this resolve. Then he must needs put it at once into execution, for delay meant weakness, and for Barbara's sake he must be strong.

be strong.

So first he changed his lodgings, then he wrote telling her all the truth, giving her back the premise she had made, begging her to forget him, to expunge the memory of the past from her mind; because now that despair claimed him for her own, he would not link his life to any other. He did not now care to scrape and save, his motive was gone. What did it matter whether he cleared his name from that foul auspicion or not?

So, hopelessly, he went upon his way, and Barbara, all but broken-hearted, tried to believe that still the sun was shining behind the clouds, and that a bright tomorrow would dispet the darkness of their night. But it was hard, oh most hard!

It was harder still to be dragged an unwilling witness to Easie's triumphs; to share in this or that fashionable function whilst all her heart oried out for Quentin, and her soul was faint with fear of what might yet befail him. Cruel, too, it was to listen to the soft murmur of Easie's voice as she replied to her lover's wooing, for her tones were those of a woman proud and happy in her love.

It had come to this, Essie had at last discovered she owned a heart, and that heart she had given to the penniless son of an almost penniless earl. But she said with a bittle laugh "Archie has the title and I the money; it is a very fair exchange!" And only to Barbara did she add.

"But we love each other in quite a foolish fashion. I can understand now what keeps you so true to poor Quentin Branscembe; for not all the world could make the believe that Archie loved me for any but my own sake," and, luckily for Essie, this time she was not mistaken.

Quentin lived quietly enough in his new home, nothing occurring to disturb the dull tenor of his life until one evening, in early June, when two people moved into apartments facing his own; they were a man and woman, and despite their

evident poverty an indescribable air of birth an

breeding hung about them.

The woman was apparently the man's junior by some years, for his hair and beard were grizzled he walked slowly and painfully, leaning on her arm, she tending him with pathetic solicitude. He was evidently in ill health, for hot as the evening was he wore a great cost and a nuffler.

evening was he wore a great coat and a muffler.

"Poor wretch!" thought Quentin as they disappeared in the doorway, "he does not look as though he had long to live, or any great cause to cling to life; but what will that poor soul do when he is gone, for it is evident that she is devoted to him."

He glanced curiously across at the opposite house, then he staggered back with a half-

The man he had been watching was seated by a window, and his sharpened profile bore such a look of Ralph Craven that Quentin was a moment unnerved.

When he ventured to look again, taking care to screen himself from view, the likeness grew upon him.

There was the same delicate aquiline nose, the same sarcastic curve to the finely-cut lips; the eyes beneath the black brows were dark and flashing as Quentin had just cause to remember.

What matter if he had grown a beard, if the raven hair had changed its hue—he had found his man—it was indeed Ralph Ccaven.

His heart gave a great exultant throb as he realised his enemy was under his own supervision. He no longer regretted his poverty, for had he not fallen on evil days Ralph had never come within his ken.

He now began to play the part of spy. He carefully noted the goings and comings of his opposite neighbours. He soon learned that it was quite safe for him to leave his lodgings for business, for Kalph did not rise until mid-day; and he had only to loiter until the friendly twi-

light fell to enter unseen, or at least unrecognised.
On the Sundays which he used to devote to
walking he now remained in the stuffy room
watching and waiting, he hardly knew for what.

watering and watering, no natury assistant Ralph had been under his espionage three weeks, when on a Saturday night, the woman issued from the house, and after a quick glance round went swiftly up the street.

Hardly knowing why Quentin rose and followed her at a safe distance, she turned into a pawnbroker's shop—a moment's hesitation and be too entered. By leaning forward he could see her face, as with a trembling hand she offered her pledge.

# CHAPTER IX.

An exchamation rose to his lips as he recognised the fellow solitaire to the one Barbara had forwarded to him. He could not be mistaken in it, the assistant turning it over and over with many a curious glance at his customer, asked if she had not the other. She answered in a low refined voice that her busband had been so unfortunate as to lose it, and nothing but the greatest necessity induced him to part with the second one.

Then, whilst they were discussing the sum to be loaned, she pleading for more than was offered, Quentin went quietly out, waiting lower down for the woman's reappearance. She came out hurriedly, and he went to meet her.

hurriedly, and he went to meet nor.

"It was a pity," he said, gravely, "to part with so precious a jewel for so mean a sum—especially as I have its fellow in my possession."

She started violently; but recovering herself said proudly,-

"Who are you, sir, that you should interest yourself in my proceedings, or that you should withhold my husband's goods from him?"

"If you take me to your husband he will answer those questions for you. When I knew him he was called Ralph Craver."

"Are you one of his creditors?" she gasped,
"if so you never shall have access to him wailst I
live. He is ill—oh! on my honour I swear it—
I will not have him troubled about trifles. You
may take half of what that man gave me for the

selitaire, although Heaven knows I can ill spare

"Do I look like a prosperous tradesman?" in-rrupted Quentin, bitterly. "I am almost terrupted Quentin, bitterly. "I am almost as poor as he—bankrupt in everything save honour. Take me to him, announce me as Mr. Banham ; I am curious to see if he remembers

She regarded him steadily a moment; then

ahe said.

"You are a gentleman. These are topsy turvy days, when it does not do to judge a man by his coat, and you do not look evil. Come with me; but remember that in in the house where we reside we are known as Mr. and Mrs. Charles. I am puzzled," she went on, dubiously, "to guess how you learned my identity."

"That will all be explained presently I think,"

said Quentin: and then in silence they made their way back to the dingy house, and he followed her upstairs into a rather large but shabkily-furnished room, where a man was sitting, his head bowed in his hands. Quentin's guide moved

quickly towards him.

"Dear Ralph, I have not been long; but I was a little delayed by a friend who knew you in better days. Mr. Banham, you will excuse him rising, he is very weak; " even as she apologised Halph turned in his chair, half rose, with seme remnant of his old courtesy; then seeing and recognising his visitor he shrieked aloud "Branscombe!" and fell face forwards to the floor, whilst from his lips issued a tiny stream of bloom, which told its own tale to the frantic woman kneeling beside him.

Once before she had seen him thus, and the doctors said a second attack meant death; he had broken a small blood-vessel, and in his weak enfeebled condition there could be but small hope

for him.

The light was fading in the summer sky, the day was nearly ended; for the man upon the bed there could be no earthly morrow. The sands of life were ebbing fast away, and not all the love, not all the care of the faithful woman beside him, could prolong the little span of time allotted to him.

Quentin, with all resentment gone, was seated at his left hand, whilst a magistrate and a solicitor

waited to receive his dying deposition.

"I will tell you all as quickly as I can," panted Ralph Craven, "it is a gruesome story, and I would fain have spared my wife the recital. She has been as an angel to me, and I deserved nothing but harshness from her."

He paused, and his wife moistened his parched lips with milk; she was steady and firm now, she would not break down so long as he had need of her. Then he spoke again in a low and thrilling

I, Ralph Craven, murdered Stafford Laue on

the morning of October, eighty two."

A great sob rose to the wife's lips, only she suppressed it, and shivering, cowered beside the bed with face hidden in the coverlet, and the

dying man went on,—
"I had no malice against the lad; I liked him more than well, but I was hard pressed for money; I knew the terms of his father's will, and I detarmined that I would possess both his fortune and his sister, seeing I could not have the one without the other. I'll swear I never loved Miss Lame; she was a foolish, shallow girl, and I had given my heart to my wife, then Miss Everton she, too, was an heiress, but her father had heard something to my discredit and abruptly terminated our engagement. Then I met Lane, and having discovered all that I wished to know, I engaged Hollytor, where I lived as a man of means. In a short time I had won from Miss Lane a promise to marry me, and then I set to work to possess myself of the fortune which I felt should be hers.

It would all have been so much easier but for the arrival of her cousin, Miss Barbara Lane, who Emily, my wife, I would spare you if I i. I planned to murder Stafford. It was so quickly done, I was in the wood when he and Branscombe entered, I even overheard their con-versation, saw them part, then I worked my way

round by the south exit at the spot just beyond the pool, and I waited for Stafford to come. Presently I saw him amongst the trees, and heard him calling my name, but I made no reply ; with a petulant gesture he was walking away a petuant gesture in was watting away when a fired at him twise in quick succession; he gave one awful ory as he fell, but he never moved or spoke after, and long before Branecombe reached him I had made good my escape, re-entering by the east gate. All that followed is known to you; hunted, with a price upon my head, carrying my life in my hands, I made my way to Southampton where, strangely enough, I once more met Miss Everton. The truth concerning me she did not know, except that I was a rained man, and loving me still she became my wife; losing friends, fortune, happiness, by that one supreme act of self-sacrifice and devotion. Be kind to her when I am gone; she is all alone in the world. Oh Em! Em! to what a pass your love has brought

He lay for a while with his eyes closed, scarcely breathing, and no one ventured to break the solemn silence; but suddenly, looking round, he said, "The solitaire-I had forgotten that. In my mad flight I caught my cuff upon a bramble, and the solitaire fell to the ground, rolling out of sight; afterwards, when I dared to return to Redmond I found Miss Lane had been before me; but that part of my story you have heard. give me the pen; let me sign my confession whilst strength is left me. Ah, Heaven I haw his trembling fingers trailed along tired I am. the paper, then the witnesses wrote their names beneath the feeble characters, and he, falling back amongst his pillows said, "Leave us now, these last moments are here and mine, forgive me if you can Branscombe. I am glad you discovered me, or, I might have carried my secret with me to the grave. Tell Essie, poor, feelish little Essie, I repented my crime with a repentance which saped the very life out of me. Now, Em, now, kiss me, do not fail me in this last hour," and, as the three men went out they saw him locked in his wife's arms, his face white and drawn resting upon her breast.

In the middle of the night the summons

In the middle of the logic came; Ralph sat suddenly creet, his eyes dilated, his form quivering with horror; twice he shouted "Stafford! Stafford!" then, in a lower voice, keep back, in the name of Heaven, keep back, and so crying, fell like a log among his pillows, and spoke no more. Through all the dreadful time which followed, Quentin was Emily Craven's truest friend; it was he who reconciled her proud father to his beloved, but erstwhile, rejected daughter; he who took all painful duties upon himself, and although in the anguish of her grief she uttered words which were alike unjust and untrue he made no remonstrance, knowing well

her mind was distraught.

After the funeral, Mr. Everton took her back to her old home, but she never recovered the shock of her husband's death, or the horror which had fallen upon her when first she learned the terrible secret of his past. She gently sank, as gently died, at the last being as a little child in thought and feeling, and they buried her beside her mother. She never heard her husband's name her mother. She never heard her husband's name execrated. She never knew that the victim of his duplicity, regained all that he had lost, but none

It was a year later, and at Redmond Hall a small party had gathered; there was Essie gayer than before, assuming matronly ways which sat funnily upon her; there was Aunt Kelso as good-natured as ever, quoting poetry to Archie Lord Childsley, to his infinite disgust, and through the dim vista of trees, Barbara walked with her husband; her hands were filled with fregrant pinks, and the gladness in her eyes was softened

by regret.
When Essie saw her, she advanced to meet her

quickly.

"For you," said Barbara, giving the flowers into her keeping; "they are the first which have blossomed by Stafford's grave. I felt that you would prize them;" and then leaving Essie, with her face buried in her bouquet, they walked to the house through the sunshine, and Heaven's own peace was upon them.

THE END.

# UNDER A CLOUD.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE gravity which had hung over Olive Durant all the morning increased as they drew near the Towers. She had received so much kindness from the family there that she could not bear to think of the shadow which hung over the grand old house. In the avenue they met Percy, and Alice, who was, driving, baving learned the accomplishment recently, drew rein at once.
Olive's quick eyes decided that something

more than his sister's illuess must have happened to change him thus. He looked positively haggard. His face was like that of one in some terrible danger, who in vain racked his brain to flud some chance of escape. Alice Melville was troubled too, for she felt no light cause could have brought that fearfully anxious look to his dark eyes. Finding that Olive was silent and trembling from head to foot, the younger girl took the inquiries on herself.

"We have come to ask after Barbara. We only heard of her illness this morning."

"She is just the same," replied Percy. "She never closed her eyes all night; even the professional purse, who is used to sad scenes, it is painful work to watch her, her face is so full of sarpestness, her eyes so full of pleading, and yet she cannot speak to tell us what she wants, and when we ask her to try and make a sign we should understand, our voices do not seem to reach her.

A spasm, as of convulsive pain, crossed Olive

Durant's face as she said,—
"When did it happen? We only heard the news this morning, and even then we did not know what was the matter."

"I think no one quite knows that," said Percy gravely. "She was out alone yesterday, and she was brought home unconscious. Dr. Harley talks of some great mental shock; but for Barbara's own sake if she recovers, we want as little gossip as possible as to the nature of the illness, and my mother has spoken of it to the servants as syncope from which my sister has suffered before.

"She has looked terribly ill lately."

"Yes," he sighed, "and you too, are paler and more delicate-looking than when you first settled at High Chiff Lodge, Miss Durant."
"I am not ill," said Olive, gently. "There are worse troubles than bodily ailteents, Mr. Fellows."

And somehow from his eyes to here there. flashed a glance of such deep tenderuces, such devoted love, that Alice Melville guessed his The girl was delighted. What could be secret. better than that they should care for each other, her childhood's friend and the consin she had learned to love so dearly. Percy would shelter Olive from the troubles which seemed to surround her. If only he would speak out. Quick as thought Alice decided he should have the opportunity.

I see Lady Fellowes on the terrace; she has come out for a little air. I will run and speak to her, if you don't mind waiting for me, Olive."

She was gone before Miss Durant could raise any objection. Percy was left alone with the girl he loved almost more than life. How beautiful she was and how fragile. If she were, indeed, another victim of Robert Lang, how well she hid the secret; but Parcy felt confident of one thing, whatever sorrow was hidden in that secret it was on Olive's part, a sinless one,

She looked up at him suddenly. Her lovely eyes thrilling him through.

"If only you were not in such trouble your-selves, I wanted to ask your advice."

pressed her hand.

"My best advice and help are at your service always," he answered gravely. "Only trust me, and let me do all a friend or brother can for you. I have feared there was some trouble pressing on you.

"There is," She besitated strangely. "Mr-Fellows, I must tell someons or I shall go mad. Alice is as true as steel, but she is almost a

child. I cannot lay my burden on her slender ahoulders.

"Mine will bear it cheerfully," he answered;
"but it may make things easier for you if I tell

you I know your secret!"
"You! Impossible!"

"Forgive me ! I have thought so much about you, fels so much for you. I could hardly help You are Miss Durant now, sing it. tatil last Jamary you were known as Olive Lester. Don't think," went on the young man, eagerly, "that I was curious or inquisitive, that I tried to find this out. It seemed to come to me like a sudden revelation. You could not bear any allusion to South Africa or Port Agnes. You shrank from meeting any one who came from the last place. You seemed to have dropped all the friends of your earlier years. Then Dr. Harley heard inadvertently one day of David Lester, the richest marchant in Port Agnes, whose only child, Olive, sailed for England last January, and somehow I knew by instinct it was you.

She looked furtively round to the terrace, but Affice had taken a coair close to Lady Fellowes, and showed no signs of returning. Office Durant looked into the face of the man who loved her,

and said sadly,-

That is not all, My father left England under a cloud, and dropped his surname till better days came. In a very little while he was cleared of the suspicion attached to him, but then he had grown used to being plain David Leater, and could not well change. If that was all my secret, Mr. Fellowes, I should not feel crushed down to the earth with shame. I am faint and sick at heart for the future, because nearly a year ago I blighted my whole life."

"Don't," said Percy, with a world of tender-aces in his voice, "don't talk so. The past is onet, Miss Duraut. Olive, no one can blame you

"But they can, I disobeyed and deceived the best father girl ever had. I deserted him for-but, oh. I have been punished, terribly punished

"It is strange that my sister Barbara should have been the first person to find you and bring you home," said Percy; "she, too, has suffered from the same cause; she loved Robert Lang as fondly and devotedly as woman can love, and-I think your secret, is that, as Vane Carlyon be won your heart."

She bowed her head.

"I don't think I loved him really, but he was so different from anyone I had ever met, and he promised to take me to England and then, when Dad told me he wasn't a good man, I would not

believe him; oh, it was wicked of me, indeed!"
Percy was stroking the white hand he still held, and the patient popy, bending her head, onjoyed a comfortable feed of grass and thisties. For a little while no one spoke, then Percy said,

gravely,-

"I am thankful to be able to speak to you about this. Ye terday, a letter came from Dr. Evans. I believe it was intended for my father, but, from some mistake in the address, I opened My father is so much engrossed with Barbara that I em glad it came into my hands."

"Was it," her voice trembled, "about me?"
"Yes, -do not tremble so, there was nothing in the letter to give a clue to your secret to anyone who did not know or guess it. Dr. Evans wanted some friend to know that a danger threatened you, so that they wight help to guard you from

it," Her face was deadly white.
"You know the truth," she said brokenly;
"there is but one person I have to dread; in seven years from January or sooner, if he gets ticket of leave, Robert Lang will be here, and may come to find me."

You do not read the papers ?"

" Never.

"Then I had better tell you. Oh, Olive, be brave; Robert Lang escaped from prison, and is believed by the African authorities to be now in England."

The reins dropped from her nerveless hands, but the patient pany took no advantage of it. Percy was watching her with a deep pity on his face. "Are you quite sure ?"

I fear so; our own history, Olive, is strangely

linked with yours, for this man has been the blight of our home. Through Robert Lang my father is a poor embarrassed man. Through him I am the heir to broken fortunes. Through him, my sister Barbara is, perhaps, near death. We, like you, have suffered so much through this villain, that his return to England means as much surrow for us as for you.

her eyes opened wide with fear, "if he

were in England, he would seek me out." a "Yes, but like the rest of the world at Port Agues, he may have known you only as Miss Lester

She bowed her head.

" Dad said the change of name might hide me for a little while. Oh, he was so tender, so thoughtful, he meant to leave no trace of our idencity with the Lesters, and to sell his business, that he might come to England and guard me

from Robert Lang."
"I assure you," said Percy, earnestly, "you may rely on my father to do that. If he did not care for you already, as Barbara's friend you would have another claim on his sympathy, because, like himself, you had suffered through this villain."

Again the question came from her parched

"Why do you believe he is in England! It would cost a great deal of money and I know, I am certain, he was almost penniless at the time of his trial."

Percy's face flushed.

"I am afraid my sister has supplied him with money. Oh, not from love of him! In health Parbara hates Lang now as much as we do, but he had a strange magnetic influence over her, and we believe he has used this to extort money

"But then she would know where he is."
"I believe she does know. I believe he is near here in hiding, and that the agitation of meet-ing him, yesterday, brought on Barbara's illness."

Olive was still very white, but there was a trange set resolution on her face which struck

strange set resolution on her face which struck Percy as the sadness of despair.

"It he finds me out," she said slowly, "I must give him up to the police; it may be cruel and unwomanly, but I shall do it. I can't forgive him for blighting the last months of my father's life with a terrible pain. I might forgive my own wrongs, but not that, not that."

"It would be the best thing you could do, said Percy gravely, "if you are strong enough.

I think I am.

"Dr. Harley, who knows as much as I do, save the fact of that letter I received from Port Agnes yesterday, thinks Lang will come to you in dis-guise and demand hush money. He will try and persuade you that it would be thought a very disgraceful thing in England to have been ened to a convict, and so work on your fears as to levy blackmail on you. If you once give in. you prepare a lasting persecution for yourself. As to the disgrace of having once been engaged to him, it is a misfortune my sister has shared, and I am certain no one has ever shown her less respect and kindness for it."

Olive Durant lifted her beautiful sad eyes to

Percy's face.

I am not engaged to Robert Lang," she said, in a broken, despairing voice, "Heaven help me, I am his wife!"

## CHAPTER XVI.

DR. AND MRS. CURTIS were not rich people; a naval surgeon with a large family and no private means rarely comes under that description.

They had enough to educate their children, and, with strict economy, live as became their station, but there was no superfluity for visiting

or attempts at fashionable society.

Why Supart had taken the furnished house at Norwood for a year, that being the extent of her brother's leave of absence; it was in a fairly good ne ghbourhood, large enough for Mrs. Curtis to have all her brood under her wing at holiday

times, and conveniently near a railway station.

Mrs. Supart herself lived close by, and had the habit of often dropping in to see her sister-in-law and have a friendly chat.

The story of Olive Durant's illness, of her near relationship to the Wyndhams, and of her finally settling down in a quiet Yorkshire village were of

course discussed between these ladies,
Mrs. Cartis very much regretted being away
from home when Olive called, and begged Mrs.
Stupart, if she ever heard of Miss Durant again visiting her relations at Penge, to be sure and let

Why don't you write and ask her to spend a few days with you?" asked the widow, seem to have taken a fancy to her." Mrs. Curtis's pale face flushed.

I should like to do so, Mattie, but you see Olive Durant is a great heiress and we are quite

homely folk."

"She may be an heiress," said little Mrs. Stu-part, impulsively, "but I should say, poor child, she was terribly alone in the world. My Tom has been in Mr. Wyndham's office for years, and he Mrs. Wyndham is the most hatoful woman he ever met. If a young fellow, seeing her for a little while at an evening party, took such a dis-like to her I should say she must be disagreeable indeed.

But she wouldn't have any real power over Olive," objected Mrs. Curtis; "the dear girl is of age, and her settling at High Cliff Lodge proves that she can act independently of her aunt.

Mrs. Stupart besitated.

"Mr. Wyndham is a just master if a hard one, and I shouldn't like to say anything sgainst him, but Tom says his wife is not to be trusted. She used to have an orphan niece, Miss Melville living with her and the way she treated her made Tom's blood boil."

"But if she is such a treacherous woman, she probably values people by their fortune," said the surgeon's wife, "and as an heiress Olive would probably find favour with her."

Olive Durant did not write many letters ; people with a heavy secret grief weighing on them rarely do, but from time to time she sent Mrs. Curtis a few lines telling of her life at High Chir Lodge, and what a pleasant companion she found

in her cousin Alice, who had come to live her.

"And I should say Miss Melville was thankful
to get away from the Wyndhams," commented Mrs. Stupart, "but it seems a little odd two young girls like that living alone."

Oh, they have a chaperon, a Mrs. Jocelyn. I remember Olive wrote to me that her aunt, Mrs. Wyndham, advertised in the Times, and they had I don't know how many answers. very pleased with Mrs. Jocelyn because she was so young and pretty, and Mrs. Wyndham was quite satisfied because she was related to Lady Tollington.

Mrs. Stupart started.
"Related to Lady Tollington!"
"Yes. I suppose it seems hard for a Countess's relative to have to earn her own bread, but this is an age of changes; and I am quite sure dear Olive would show anyone who lived with her every consideration."

"Heaven help your 'dear Olive' if her chaperon is Mabel Jocelyn," replied the stronger-minded sister-in-law. "Dear me, Edith, did you never hear of the woman?"

"I have fived so much out of England," objected Mrs. Curtis, "and I am not fond of scaudal.

This is not scandal, but the truth. If you have any regard for Miss Durant, you ought to warn her of her chaperon's character."

" But I don't know that her chaperon is Mabel

Joce!vn.

She must be if she is related to Lady Tollington; I knew her well before her marriage, when she was just a poor little nursery governess; she is not one to forger old friends either. Why, only last summer, she sent her carriage to fetch me to spend a long day with her. The aweetest, truest-hearted woman you would meet, and her husband worships her."

"But Mrs. Joeelyn?" asked Edith Cartis, bringing the speaker back to the point. "What

did she do ?"

"Oh, my dear, it's a pitiful story. Young Jocelyn, —he had a handsome face and winning ways, poor boy, -fell in love with an adventuress.

I never even heard her maiden name, but she was-very fast and no better than she should be,

to say the very least.

She ran him into every sort of extravagance she behaved so disgracefully he had to leave the Service; then I suppose he was protty well broken hearted; he left off trying to restrain her, and she ran a low gambling saloon at the West End; he was there. She must have brought him pretty low to submit to such degradation. Then the police made a raid on the place, and, to avoid falling into their hands and dragging a good old name into the mire, he—shot himself."

How awful!

"Awe; Lord Tollington paid his debts, and did what he could to screen his memory, but he would have nothing to do with her. Mrs. Joselyn sank lower and lower after that, and disappeared Last year, I heard she was in London altogether. living on her wits and what poor Lady Tollington, for her brother's sake, allowed her. I know she left town in May or June, and Bertha, I mean Lady Tollington, told me with tears in her eyes, Mabel had gone to be companion to an old lady in Yorkshire, and she did hope, for her brother's sake, it would be a fresh start for her."

Mrs. Curtis trembled; she did not like what she heard. If "Mabel" were really the Mrs. Jocelyn of High Chiff Lodge, why Olive Durant and her guardian ought to be warned at once. She was no fit companion or mentor for two

innocent girla.

"What can I do?" the poor lady asked her sister-in-law. "If I warn Oilve, and then it turns out her chaperon is some other Mrs. Joselyn, she might prosecute me for libel, and I have no means

might prosecute me for libel, and I have no means of finding out the truth."

"No, but I have," said Mrs. Stupart. "I'll go to Lady Tellington to morrow."

"Won't she be offended?"

"No.... I have known her for years. I was with her when her mother died. I am quite sure she won't misunderstand my questions."

"I wish you would try. The doctor and I grow very fond of Olive, and she is so terriby alone in the world, it would be dreadful if any bad woman got an influence over her."

Mrs. Stupart presented herself the following

Mrs. Stupart presented herself the following morning at Lady Tollington's; she felt in the London season there would be little chance of dading the young peeress at home, much less of securing a private interview after lunch.

She was admitted at once. Bertha was one of those few creatures whom prosperity does not spoil. Mrs. Stupart had been kind to her in the days of her poverty, and was, therefore,

welcome now.

"I am so pleased to see you," she said, when her old friend was shown into her boudoir; "my husband has had to go north on a little matter connected with his property, and I am all alone, you must stay and lunch with me, and I'll drive home afterwards."

Mrs. Stupart besitated.

Mrs. Stupart cestated.

"I am afraid you may be vexed with me for coming," she said quietly, "when you hear my errand, but you were once a lonely orphan girl yourself, and so I hope you will forgive my asking you something in the interest of another orphan."

"Of course I will. If I can help your protegee in any way depend upon me. I think I pity all lonely girls because my own girlhood was so sad and dreary."

Very gravely Mra. Stupart gave her the story of Olive Durant, of her lonely voyage under the Curtis's protection, of her long sad illness, and her recovering only to hear her father's loss, and

finally of her taking her penniless cousin to live with her, and treating her just as a sister."

"She must be a sweet girl," said Bertha simply, "and I should like to know her very when her her improvement Lean do much, only I can't imagine what layour 1 can ober. The drawing-rooms are over or you might have been going to ask me to present her."

Mrs. Stupart shook her head. Olive Durant is in deep mourning, and will not enter society for another year. Her aunt, Mrs. Wyndham, has found her a chaperon who also acts as housekeeper at High Cliff Lodge."

Lady Tollington started.
"High Cliff Lodge," she repeated, "Miss

Durant can't be living there. Why I heard it was tenanted by an old lady, a client of my husband's lawyer, Mr. Wyndham."

'Olive Durant is the tenant of High Cliff Lodge. Her companion, chaperone, and house-

keeper is-Mrs. Jocelyn.

"It can't be," said Bertha brokenly; "of course I know Mabel is capable of a great deal, but this is too much. The companion of two innocent girls. The duenna of an heiress! Why Mrs. Stupart we hold her in such horror that my husband will not see her, and I should shudder if she did but touch my children.

"The Mrs. Jocelyn who is with Olive Durant told Mrs. Wyndham she was a near relation of yours, but begged you might not be referred to, as Lord Tollington's pride was so great be would not like people to know one of his wife's relations

was filling a dependant position."

"And she told me she was going to live with an old lady in the country; someone very old and infirm who never went anywhere. Mabel said she should be moped to death, but it was her only chance of a home, as she could not live on what I allowed her. I was very much against the step, but I thought an old lady could not take much harm from Mabel, and if no visitors ever came there would be no one else for her to contaminate. I see now, of course, that I ought

contaminate. I see now, of course, that I ought not to have trusted her, but for my brother's sake I was anxious to give her one more trial."

"My favour was this," replied Mrs. Stupart gravely, "would you tell me if the Mrs. Joselyn at High Cliff Lodge is really your sister-in law, everything points to the conclusion, but I did not wish to condemn her if there was the least death."

What doubt can there be," asked Lady Tollington sadly, "I have had letters from Mabel dated High Cliff Lodge, I have written to her there. I own I thought it strange she never mentioned her employer's name, of course, I understand it now."

"And I may tell my brother's wife and let her warn Olive Durant. The girl came to England in her care, and Edith is fond of her."
"Tell Mrs. Curtis by all means. I had rather, for my husband's sake, that the Wyndhams were not communicated with, but—if it is

necessary, I will agree to even that."
"It will not be necessary," said Mrs. Stupart warmly. "Olive is of age, and her own mistress. I hope you will forgive my coming to you."

There is nothing to forgive," answered Bertha gently, "but, oh! I feel sometimes there is no end to the misery Mabel will bring on me; it seems as though I could never be at peace about her. When she is in London she comes here begging, and drives me frantic lest my husband should When she is away I am always uneasy see her. lest she should be doing more wrong.

Edith Curtis listened to the revelation horror ruck. The doctor, called into consultation, was as grieved and troubled as his wife; but on one point he was firm, he would not allow her to write and warn Olive Durant against her

chaperone. You and I are quiet people, Edith, and know very little about law. I don't want you to run any risk of being prosecuted for libel. After all, if it comes to actual facts, all the evidence against Mrs, Joselyn is hearsay."

"Hearsay ! Her own sister-in law admits it." "You could hardly put Lady Tollington into the witness-box?" returned the doctor, gravely. "No, my dear, I was very much taken with Olive Durant, and I don't want any harm to come to her; but I can't have you run into dauger by writing what the law might call a libel."

"But what am I to do?" asked poor Mrs. Curtis.

"Well, my dear, we are not rich, but I shouldn't grudge a pound or two for that poor girl's good. The only thing I can think of is for you to go to High Cliff, the tourists' tickets are on now so you will get a return licket to the nearest place of note very cheaply. Then you must go on to High Cliff and tell Olive you were in the neighbourhood and turned aside to visit her. You can say more to her in half an hour than you can put in the longest letter ever penned.

"But can't I ask her here!" suggested Mrs. Curtis. " I did think she was too rich and grand to care to come to a little house like this; but, after all, perhaps she would come and it would save me that terribly long journey."

"Write to her, then, agreed the doctor, say you particularly wish to see her. Te Tell her will make her kindly welcome; but that if she really cannot have home, you would like to run down to Yorkshire for a few days. I really think that's the best thing you can do."

The letter was posted that very same day; it was a strange coincidence that it missed the country mail, and so only reached High Cliff by the second post on the very day that "Mr. Morton," was so skilfully concessed at The Lodge by the chaperon. Miss Durant's house was so far nearer little post town than was the Towers, that, unlike the Fellowes family she was honoured by a second delivery by the local letter carrier. A boon which she appreciated very little as her correspondence was an unusually small one and she took no interest at all in its arrival.

Mrs. Curtis, like many other good women, had the fault of being "a little fussy." Her letter posted, she began to wonder if Olive would come, what bed room she would give her and so cu. In fact she was quite excited on the subject, and the doctor told her smiling she began to expect an answer before her own letter could have

reached High Cliff.

"Oh, no, she would have got that yesterday." said Mrs. Curtis. "I really think I might have had a reply this morning, invitations should always be answered by return post," added the good lady, who was quite ignorant that her own

"Perhaps she was away," said the doctor, cheerfully. "She may have been staying at the Towers, or a hundred things. Don't you get into a flusier, Elith. If Mrs. Joselyn has been at High Cliff Lodge several weeks already it can't matter very much whether she stays one or two longer or not."

The day wore on. Mrs. Curtis always said afterwards she had a presentiment that something was going to happen; but, beyond her own "fussiness" before alluded to, there was really nothing remarkable in the general aspect of the little household.

It was a " arework night" at the Crystal Palace and the doctor went to see the display. He tried to persuade his wife to accompany him, but Mrs. Curtis declined. She said she was tired and would prefer to stay at home and go to bed early.

They only kept one servant-poor gentlefolks can't be extravagant—and soon after the doctor had started this damsel discovered she wanted something indispensable for to morrow's break-

fast, and must certainly go and get it.

Mrs. Curtis made no demur. She was tolerably used to being left alone in the house. There were neighbours on either side whom she could call to her aid if necessary, and generally she

But to-night Mary had hardly departed (and Mrs. Curtis lived quite a mile from the shops, so she would be gone an hour at the least) when a terrible nervous feeling seized on her mistress. The empty house seemed full of echoing noises

and retreating footsteps.

Every single tale of robbery she had ever heard came into poor Mrs. Curtis' head, and her fears increased so terribly that she had serious thoughts of locking herself in her own room till the girl

returned.

She conquered this desire, however, and went upstairs, where she carefully shut all the doors, so that their banging to and fro should not make her more fidgetty. It was "between the lights," her more fidgetty. It was "between the lights," a time she usually dearly love!; but to-night she decided it would be much cosier with the gas, so she lighted it, and drew the drawing-room blinds, feeling as she did so she was at least shut-

ting out the gathering gloom.
This accomplished she took up her work, some knitting for one of her absent children, and tried hard to forget she was alone in the house.

Suddenly, the gate swung to, sure sign some-



"OLIVE DUBART MUST BE A SWEET GIBL" SAID BERTHA, SIMPLY, "AND I SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW HER VERY MUCH,"

one had entered the little front garden. She ! listened eagerly for Mary's latch-key, instead there came a double knock so loud and prolonged; that it echoed through the house, and made the

poor lady tremble from head to foot.
"It must be a mistake," she thought, "we never have visitors so late. I think I'll wait a minute or two, Mary must be in directly."

But the minutes passed. Mary did not return, and again the knocker made itself heard.

Mrs. Curtis took a candle-she had forgotten to light the hall gas when she "shut up," and went into the little vestibule. She dared not delay longer for it might be (the first fear which strikes a mother's heart) that some accident had happened to one of her children, and this was the messenger sent to tell her of it.

She put up the chain carefully, opened the door the few inches it permitted, and peered cautiously out. She could just make out a tall

dark figure standing on the steps.

"Who's there?" she asked nervously.

thick you've made a mistake; this is Hope Villa! But the voice which answered reassured her at coce. It was a gentleman's refined and cul-tured. It had besides a ring of truth and sin-

"I wanted Hope Villa. Can I see Mrs. Curtis;"
then as an after thought, "I must apologise for such a late visit, but I have come all the way from High Cliff to-day."

Mrs. Curtis pushed back the chain, and opened

The intruder saw a gentle middle-sized

lady, even now trembling a little from agitation.

"I am so very sorry to have frightened you." he said, gently; "my father wanted me to tele-graph; but one can put so little in a telegram, and so I preferred to come and see you. I must and so I preterred to come and see you. I must introduce myself, though, my name may be strange to you; I am Percy Fellowes, of High Cliff Towers. It was my sister who found Miss Durant in the snow last winter, and brought her

He had found the way to Mrs. Curtis heart, now; she put out her hand cordially.

"I am afraid you will think me very foolish Mr. Fellowes. I am alone in the house, as my husband has gone to the Crystal Palace, and the servant is out on an errand. I think I got into a nervous state, and the moment I heard you knock I fancied something must be the matter. Do, please, come in i"

He followed her into the pretty little drawingroom, and then she saw that in spite of his kind cheery voice and pleasant manner his face was as troubled as her own. He looked like one on whom some terrible care was pressing. His features were white and drawn. They had that sad, haggard look which is doubly painful in the young; and as he sank into the chair she placed for him it was with the air of one almost worn out in body and mind.

"Miss Durant," at last came from his eager lips; "tell me, madam, is she here !"
"No." Something in his manner impelled Mrs.

"No." Something in his manner impered aris. Curtis to answer decisively and to the point. Often, poor thing, she annoyed her friends terribly by her rambling replies. "But I have been expecting a letter from her all day. When you teld me your name, and that you came from High Chiff, I made sure you had brought me a message.

Percy shook his head sadly; he took from his pocket a sheet of grey writing paper folded in two, and showed it to Mrs. Curtis. "You wrote this?"

"Yes; I posted it the day before yesterday, and I made sure I should have had an answer to-day; but my husband said very likely Olive was away. I cannot make out how you expected to find her here."

"I saw her yesterday," said Percy, slowly; "she was then in great, I may say, in terrible trouble. I promised her to call at High Cliff Lodge early this morning. I was there soon after and I found the house one wild scene of confusion. Miss Durant was missing; her bed had not been slept in, and no one had seen her since ten o'clock last night."

Mrs. Curtis started.

"Then it is that woman's fault, depend upon it, sir, Mrs. Jocelyn is at the bottom of it; she was a woman with a shameful past; she ought never to have been allowed to come near such a girl as Olive. I wanted to write and warn my poor little friend, but my hushand said I might get into trouble by putting such things on paper, and I had far better ask Olive to come here, and tell her what I knew about Mrs. Jorelyn with my

Percy shuddered. I have no liking for Mrs. Jocelyn myself, bub I don't see how she can have had a hand in Olive's disappearance, since, when it took place, she was cusappearance, since, whon it took place, she was asleep. Your letter was discovered on Miss Durant's dressing-table; her cousin gave it to me. I knew that, poor girl, there was only too strong a reason for her wanting to leave High Cliff, and I thought she had jumped as your invitation, and not waited to write, but come to you at once. Why she should have come so sud-denly and mysteriously I could not make out, I would trust her purity and truth as I would my own honour; and I am quite certain that, in leaving her home, she had some reason so powerful as to conquer every thought of prudence.

Mrs. Curtis looked at him with tears gathering

in her soft, kind eyes.

"But where is she?" asked the gentle lady.

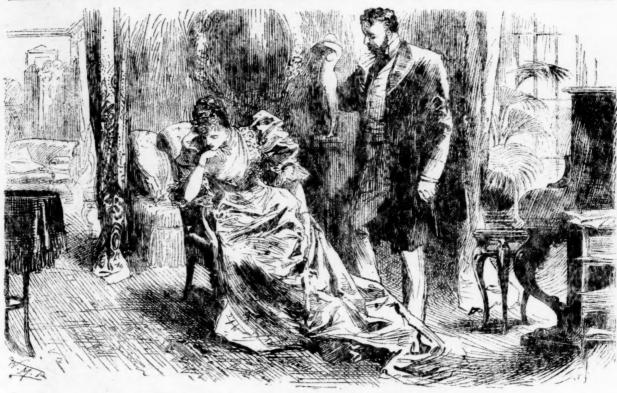
"Of all the girls I ever knew, my pretty Olivo great world; was the least fitted to be alone in this she was so sensitive and tender-hearted. Fellowes, something terrible must have happened, or she would never have left her home.

Percy's heart cohood the words. It was mystery on mystery; he only realised how completely he had built his hopes on finding Olive with Mrs. Curtis, when he heard those hopes were vain.

Only one thing seemed clear, Olive Durant, with her delicate refeath the transfer of the complete o

with her delicate, refined beauty, her fragile health, and her sensitive nature was lost to her friends—lost in the great cold world which can be so cruel to lonely girls.

(To be continued.)



"GUINEVERS, LOOK UP, MY DEAR, AND END MY ANXIETY IN SITHER ONE WAY OF THE OTHER," SAID SIE ANGES.

# O MISTRESS MINE!

-:0:-

CHAPTER VIII.

AT MINSTER COURT,

Ir was late on that night of Mrs. Wentworth's garden-party before Loudon Mainwaring sought

He and his father, alone together in the library over a last eigar, had had a great deal to say to each other-much to discuss as quietly and dispassionately as possible-much to weigh and propose for the best, on both sides, regardless of all that was past and now hopeless.

The old gentleman, by this time, was in pos-ssion of the entire history of the young man's defeat, his non-success in the venture of his wooing; and he, the elder, had done what he could—his simple all—to cheer and comfort the younger in this his first real grief.

Father and son separated as the clocks throughout the silent old house were striking the midnight hour-parted with no word now beyond the ordinary "Good-night;" but in the accompanying firm hand-clasp exchanged between them there seemed to lank, as it were, a tacit and mutual understanding, the result in all probability of their recent conversation.

was a haggard, care-worn young face that pressed Don's pillow that wretched night; and no skep came to ease those dark, aching eyes of his—the first wan streak of the early summer dawn finding them wide and staring, still full of their hopeless, incurable pain.

Minster Court, the country-test in England of Sir Angus Adair, was of Elizabethan build, autwardly gray, heary-looking, and partly clad

with ivy.

Its heavy chimney-clumps were nearly hidden in the clustering dark leaves; so too, indeed, were maken with their wondrous the picturesque gables, with their wondrous carved oaken spikes almost black with age.

Some of the windows in the front of the ! mansion were enormous, with tinted armorial bearings on the upper panes of them, whilst others here and there were as narrow and inconvenient as the cramped casements of a country chapel.

Over the principal entrance hung the great porch, with a solid base of lichen grown stonework, roofed over with ponderous oaken beams, and seated with massive oaken benches.

and seated with massive oaken beinches.
Altogether a most irregular and picturesque old building, gladdening ever to the eye of wandering brothers of the brush.
The house had been built upon a grassy eminence, and stood surrounded on all sides by its own beautiful parkland, in which a good deal of the timber was a negent and house a Minater. of the timber was as ancient and hoary as Minster Court itself—oaks and beeches with gnarled mossy trunks, and knotted monster limbs, with a bark, in toughness and horniness, resembling the

hide of an elephant.

Hill and dale all round were alike rich in timber and verdure, the copses and plantations swarming with game, from a jack-snipe to a kingly cock-pheasant.

Minster Court was indeed a property to be roud of; and Sir Angus loved right well his birthright and inheritance.

It was his birthplace for one thing, and his

birthright for another.

He saw and troubled but seldom his estate in Scotland; he usually let the shooting on his bleak northern moors, preferring at all times his Grayminster home.

But still Minster Court, large and rambling as it was, was decidedly a rather lonely sort of as it was, was decidedly a rather lonely sort of dwelling for a solitary and comparatively ticless man; and recently the notion had been rarely absent from Sir Angus's thoughts that, with someone to share them constantly with him, those huge deserted rooms, so chill and stately of aspect now, might, if one only knew how to set about effecting the transformation, be made bright and light and cheerful enough.

and light and cheerful enough.

It would be both delightful and desirable to

inhabit them then-pleasant to feel that someone besides himself was taking pleasure and pride in the noble old house, and to know, moreover, to hug oneself in the satisfaction, that it was the sweet presence of a wife and helpmate that was changing all unconsciously the clinging sense of emptiness and forlors, brooding silence into the very comfort and holiness of "dear home" itself—his wife, Lady Adair, the fair proud mistress of it all !

to behold that idea, and high ideal, fully Yesrealised would be perfect happiness indeed; and Sir Angus knew in the soul of him, nay, frequently told bimself now, that there was but one woman living in all the wide world whom he could ever make the chatchaine of Minster Court -and the name of that one woman was Guine-

vere Wentworth.
"If she would only show herself a trifle more warm in feeling, a shade more cordial in her manner towards me!" he used to think sadly sometimes; "then I might hope reasonably to win her for my own in time. Somehow I hardly think that she can care a straw about

me—she is always so cold and indifferent."

It was another lovely afternoon, some three days subsequent to Mrs. Wentworth's gardenparty at Ivylands, and Sir Angus Adair sat alone in his library; a lofty, sombre apartment, with a good deal of crimson drapery and carved panel-

ling about it everywhere,
The odour of morocco leather pervaded the cool and shady atmosphere of the great room; and the windows looked out upon the northern side of the park, the centre window of the three opening to a broad shallow step on the wide ordered terrace which flanked that portion of the house.

The master of Minster Court was seated at his littered writing-table ; before him, on the desk of it, were spread pens and paper of various kinds, and his head was resting sidewise upon his left hand.

His eyes were fixed in perplexity upon the clean blank sheet of writing-paper beneath them; and his right hand as yet simply trifled with the pen that wandered aimlessly at intervals over the

blotting pad near.

Every now and then the lips beneath his dustcoloured beard parted in the shadow of a smile; a smile half tender, half self-pitying, that faded gradually into an expression of settled gravity. "Shall I write?" he mused presently aloud—

or shall I speak to her by word of mouth?
What will her answer be, I wonder? I dare not think. The other evening-poor child-she seemed at once pained and startled when I so far forgot myself as to call her by her christian name in the sweet temptation of the moment to confess to her all that I felt. I am older than she is, too-too old, she will consider, I dare say-yet Heaven above us knows that I could not love has more than I do, were I ten years older or ten

years younger than I happen to be."
He smiled again to himself the same half wistful, half-rueful-smile, and traced more lines aimlessly upon the blotter under his pen.
The old Elizabethan mansion was very silent,

both within doors and without.

From under the crimson-lined blinds, which were lowered over the windows, all open this afterneon to the summer air, the fragrance of the

lovely gardens stole in.
The bees hummed drowsily around the flower-The bees hummed drowsily around the flowering creepers that wreathed and garlanded the windows outside, and the faint lowing of the Scotch owen in a distant part of the park was wafted in likewise upon the whispering breeze that just tapped and flapped the blind-tassels against the panelling by which they hung.

"How shall I address her in beginning—how ought I to address her, I wonder!" thought Sir Argus, his doubts and fears multiplying with hallving and procreatination, and his hopes

dallying and procrastination, and his hopes vanishing proportionately. "It seems so formal and so cold to open such a letter with 'My dear Miss Weutworth' simply; and yet I dare not, I could not presume to—Ah, no!" he ex-claimed, with sudden resolution. "I will see her myself. I will go to her and offer her my love in person. It will, after all, be the easier and more satisfactory plan. I shall be better able then to really cares for me, or is ever likely to do so. I will seek her at once—atraightway—this very afternoon. My Guinevere, I have lost too much time already."

He pushed away from him impatiently the writing materials all in a heap together, and rose with a sigh of relief from his elbow-chair at the littered desk-table.

Yes, thank goodness, he said to himself, his mind was made up at last—his determination

As he stood there erect for a moment, and was about to step across the room to the door, he uttered an exclamation sharp and sudden-a low ery, akin to a groan, of dire and unmistakable anguish.

His features seemed convulsed and transformed in an instant; his eyes were fixed and starting; the perspiration poured from his brow.

One band had gone swiftly to his left breast; the other was clutching wildly at the firm back of the albow writing-chair from which he had so lately risen.

Massive and substantial as was this self-same chair in the library at Minster Court, it yet creaked and shivered to its castors beneath the weight of Sir Augus Adair.

Leaning with all bis force upon the convenient piece of furniture he had gripped, his breath held fast from issuing between his drawn and leaden lips, many yards from the bell-ropes and tongue-tied with agony—save for that pitiful cry which at the first, sharp, short, and involuntary, had escaped him as he stood—the powerful figure of Sir Angus rocked gently to and fro in torture too acute for human utterance, a suffering in its pain too horrible.

It was soon over, however, the spasm lasting scarcely half a minute.

His face by degrees grew less contracted; the expression of wild dumb anguish died out of the starting eyes; the bronze gradually crept back to the sufferer's cheeks, and the awful ashy grayness as slowly left them.

His vice-like grip loosened a little from the back of the elbow-chair; and soon Sir Angus Adair stood firm and upright again—the agony

overpast—himself once more.

Yes, it was over, and he could draw again a deep, free thankful breath, wiping the moisture from his forehead and hair as he did so.

There chanced, fortunately, to be both wine and brandy upon a table at the end of the room;

and Sir Angus now crossed over to it, and drank

a small portion of the latter eagerly.

"By Jove! that was a hard one," he muttered as he set down the empty glass—"a tough oue indeed—tougher than I ever remember before. I suppose, by rights, I ought to seek advice somewhere, and ascertain whether anything downright serious may be likely at any time to result from these confounded attacks. They take a fellow these confounded attacks. They take a fellow to brutally unawares. My dear mother's end," he reflected gloomity—"it was appallingly sudden. I must not forget that."

It was about half-past three o'clock then, and the afternoon sun was at its brightest and

At four o'clock, just as the sleek Alderney cows from the bailiff's paddock, as a certain meadow was called on the estate, were lurching slowly and heavily homeward so the farm for the milking-hoar, Sir Angus Adair, his toilet remade to immaculate neatness, his bronzed face still a little pale and drawn about the mouth, passed out of the lodge gates of Minster Court on his hopeful way and errand to Ivylands.

#### CHAPTER IX.

#### QUINEVERE'S ANSWER.

In the dainty, airy drawing-room at Ivylands, gazing listlessly out from the open window at the brilliant and variegated flower-beds on the sloping lawn, all glowing in the golden radiance of the westering aun, sat Guinevere Wentworth; her little white hands folded idly on the scrap of lacework in her lap, her red-gold head lying gracefully back, and a little on one side, against the silverplush enshions of her low easy chair.

She was looking rather paler than she was wont to look-paler and more thoughtful-and there was discernible in the beautiful violet eyes a sort of uneasiness, a vague unrest, as though Guine-vere were sick at heart and secretly wretched, with a restlessness and an expectancy that she could not control.

She had seen nothing of the Mainwarings since the Ivylands garden-party, now three days

gone by.

Neither Ursula nor Millicent had called at the house; and it was scarcely likely that Loudon himself would do so, Guinevere remembered

With all her daring, and tranquil, nonchalant way of meeting and opposing disagreeable things generally, she could not, all the same, summon up sufficient courage, just at present, to make a visit on her own account at the old fashioned redbrick house in the High-street; and she wondered what Milly would say to her, how receive her and treat her; for, of course, Don had told them all everything by this time, she thought-the bitter story of that twilight interview in the garden at Ivylands, on the evening of that hateful party

She was almost wishing that Millicent would call that afternoon, and, if she-Milly Mainwaring-had made up her mind to go into a temper over the affair with Don, why, Guinevere would prefer that her friend should go into it and get out of it again as quickly as possible, whilst Mrs. Wentworth herself was not in the way-and sh was not in the way this afternoon, as it chanced, Guinevere being at home by herself, and alone,

Guinevere felt certain, somehow, that an explan ation of some unpleasant kind or other with Millicent Mainwaring, respecting the well-beloved brother whom Guinevere had treated so ill, would be inevitable.

Millicent as all times constituted herself Don's champion and defender—for Guinevere there would be no fleeing her righteous indignation and wrath I

would have to bear it all. Well, Guinevere was able to take care of herself.

Occupied intently with these moody thoughts of hers, she failed to hear the unfastening and closing of the gates, a manip step on the gravel of the drive, the ring which shortly followed at the visitor's bell.

The opening of the drawing-room door, together with the quiet voice of the well trained parlourmaid, first startled Guinevere from her reverie.

Sir Angus Adair.' And then the door closed softly, and they were

alone with each other.

It had come at last then !—that which she had aited for, and yet dreaded as well!

Yes, she knew instinctively what he was there for, and consequently was not in the least surprised to see him.

She had not met him either, anywhere, since the sale had not me this ether, anywhere, since the date of her mother's garden party; and now the nervousness which was so palpable in the mien of him would have revealed the purport of his visit to Guinevers, even had there been no other visible sign for her to interpret the aspect of the situation.

situation.

She rose to meet him straightway, pale but perfectly self-possessed, and held out to him her hand; and she smiled on him too, in a calm, friendly sort of way, just as she might have smiled on any other visitor whom she was not particularly glad to see.

"My mother is not at home," she remarked, the first greeting over. "She has driven out with the pony to pay some calls in Packington," Sir Angus seated himself near to her, and Guinevere began to tremble a little then.

"I am fortunate, at any rate, in having found

"I am fortunate, at any rate, in having found you at home, Miss Wentworth," Sir Angus

Adair returned earnestly. "Indeed, to tell the truth, I was exceedingly auxious to find you and to speak with you—alone—if possible, but scarcely anticipated so fair an

opportunity as this. Mrs. Wentworth is-a-a berself quite well, I trust?" he added at once nervously and courteously.
"Thank you, yes," answered Guinevere, trying to speak with her characteristic nonchalance, but

to speak with ner cusracterisms nonchainage, out somehow uttering her words with unusual rapidity, and saying too a great deal more than was necessary, in her feverish anxiety to defer the evil moment for just as long as possible, "or of course she would not have ventured out, you know. Had I felt inclined I should have accompanied her; but I hate paying stupid calls, and preferred to remain at home. My mother will be sorry to know, Sir Angus, that you called when she was out

"My visit is to yourself," he observed gently—
"solely and especially to yourself, Miss Wentworth."

"Forgive me for asking," she hastened to say, before he could go on—for the first time noticing the traces of suffering which his recent seizure had left near his eyes and mouth-"but surely you have been ill ?

"Oh, it is nothing—nothing whatever," he replied quickly, yet inexpressibly grateful to her for the sympathy and compassion which he read in her lovely eyes. "I have not been very well in her lovely eyes. "I have not been very well to-day, it is true; but I am now better -in fact

"The warm weather is trying, and you are feeling tired perhaps. May I offer you anything!

tea will be here directly," she suggested

"No, thank you—not anything—you are most kind," he said hurriedly, "Miss Wentworth— Guinevere—forgive me," he continued brokenly, Guinever—forgive ma, he continued brokenly, and he rose with startling abruptness and atood over her in his agitation, "I have called on you this afternoon to tell you something that I have been on the brink of confessing for many days past now. It is simply this, I want to tell you that I love you with all my heart—with all my strength, with all my soul; to ask you whether you can love me just a little in return. All that I possess in the world I lay at your feet, Guine-vere; you will make me the happiest man alive if you will only deign to accept it. You must ould be no fleeing her righteous indignation and rath 1 have perceived how dear you have gradually become to me—how impossible it has been for me to keep away from the house which shelters you.

You must have known that, as the days went by, each one of them has made you more precious in my eyes-if that however be possible-more my eyes—it that however be possible—more necessary to my life and happiness. Guinevere, be my wife. You are all the world to me, my dear. The love I bear you is deeper, far deeper, than any poor words of mine can ever a lequately express. My dear one—Guinevere—in pity do not say me nay."

A great hush seemed to fall upon themdead silence of a minute's duration followed on

all that he had just said.

He stood then looking down upon her as she sat with head bowed in her chair; and for the life of her then, she could not have lifted her face to meet the world of honest, yearning love that

shone for her in her lever's eyes.

She strove with all her mental strength to keep Loudon Mainwaying from entering her thoughts—tried to shut out his image alike from mind and heart in this momentous hour, and to realise only, now that it had indeed arrived, the full significance of her triumph.

But it would not do; it was of no use; the face of her boyish lover took vivid shape in her mental vision—dark, disdainful, stern and unfer-giving, as she had last looked upon it in the twilight of the garden, yet with undying passionate love lighting up furiously those dark contemptuous eyes of his, as he turned from her and left her in her faithlessness, a traitress to the

nobler feelings of her soul.

So her head, with its red-gold tresses, remained owed, and she could not lift it boldly and lie to

this man before her.

She could not say outright that she actually loved him, when she knew full well in her heart that never would she be able to do so.

Yes, the hour of triumph was indeed come; but at its best, now, that triumph seemed but a

Was, then, the coveted fruit about to taste bitter—bitter to her earthy, worldly palate as those apples of the Dead Sea ? She wished somehow that Sir Angus had been

less honest and straightforward in his declaration of love, less generous and unsuspicious as it

That manly simplicity and open-heartedness

of his were almost too much.

It was no inconsiderable addition, indeed, to the burthen which she had already to bear, the burthen which she had heaped up for her own shoulders, to have to delude, to deceive so wickedly a pure-souled honest gentleman like Sir

Angus Adair. "Guinevere," said he at length, having waited long with his customary gentle patience and courtesy for her to speak, "look up, my dear, and end my anxiety in either one way or the other. If—if you do not love me—if you feel that you never can—pray tell me so at once, Guinevere. Suspense I cannot bear."

Even now she could not answer him. Still was the beautiful red-gold head bowed low with

its conscious shame.

"One word, Guinevere—only one word, and I will be content, or try to be," he pleaded. "Yes or no—which is it to be, my dear?" he said, his hand going instinctively to his left breast.

As he had told her, suspense was hard to endure. She rose then a little unsteadily from her chair, and with a face now lily-pale looked into

Sir Angus for a moment was almost alarmed at the expression which he saw on those lovely features.

"Ah, do not let it be No," he cried, involun-

tarily.

Well, she would be honest with him to a certain extent, she thought; and at any cost she must hinder him from pressing her with awkward questions.

"I-I-do not love you, Sir Angus, it is true she faltered..."I mean, you know, at least not yet—but—but I think that possibly with time I may learn to—to care for you, to love you—as -as you deserve-

The guilty broken whisper died away ; but Sir Augus could make out of it that her answer was not absolutely a negative, certainly not a repulse unconditional.

And so, scarcely knowing what he did, in the swift, wild temptation of the moment, he caught her fast in his arms and held her against his heart, half-mad with his sudden joy.

She, passive and unresisting, rebuked him

"My darling, my own darling," he murmured, kissing fondly, reverently—for had not be attained the right to do so !—the pale cold face, my Guinevere, my own dear love at last!

To this impassioned utterance there was no actual reply on her part; but with such scant acquiescence and vague surrender Sir Angus was more than satisfied.

Mrs. Wentworth, coming in from her calls in the Packington neighbourhood, discovered Guin-evers all by herself as she had left her; caim, listless, self-possessed, and bearing no visible trace or sign of the ordeal she had lately passed through.

As Mrs. Wentworth entered the drawing-room, indeed, Guinevere herself went forward tranquilly to meet her.
"Mother," she announced, quite quietly, "Sir

Angus Adair has been here."

"Ah, I thought so," Mrs. Wentworth replied.
"I saw him in the distance turn in at the lodge-gates. I guessed that he had been here.
Well?"

"Congratulate me," Guinevere went on, in the same composed, monotonous way—"he asked me, whilst here, to marry him, and I naturally agreed that I would. In fact, it seems that he came on purpose to make the proposal."

Mrs. Wentworth's fair, tinted face beamed instantly, and she uttered a little inarticulate cryofism.

of joy.
She threw aside her yellow driving gloves, and gazed, dumb for a moment or two, at her beau-tiful daughter, in genuine admiration and delight.

Oh, Guinevere!" she said, gushingly then, and making a fond maternal rush at the girl, who however would have none of her mother's affected embraces and powdery caresees just then

"how sincerely proud and happy you have
made me! .Oh, Guinevere"—hurt and remade me! Oh, Guinevere"—hurt and re-proachful now—"do not push me from you so coldly! My darling child, will you not let your own mother assure you—"

With a little gesture of disgust Guinevere

stopped her mother's effusive humour.
"That will do," she remarked, un:uffled. "If

you are perfectly satisfied with what I have done this day, it is of course possible that, eventually, I shall become satisfied myself. At present, however, at this very moment, I wish that I were

And then she broke down unexpectedly-broke down utterly-and the true Guinevere stood

revealed.
"Yes, mother," she said, with a passion and a vehemence which somehow set Mrs. Wentworth quaking on the spot, "I wish with all my heart that I had been dead and lying at peace in my grave before bringing myself to sin as I have sinned in Heaven's sight to-day! What a creature I am," she half wept in her misery—"what a loathsome, despicable wretch!"

"Oh no, darling, do not say that! You wrong yourself," said the mother, complacently.
"When you are clawer and more used to the

"When you are calmer, and more used to the idea of it all, you will better understand, and realise by degrees, the most enviable position in which, by your thorough good sense, you have placed yourself with Sir Angus Adair. When When you are calmer, darling, you-you will be happier, you know," ventured Mrs. Wentworth, dubiously.

dubiously.

"Do not 'darling' me now! When I am calmer, as you call it," returned Guinevere, parsionately and dangerously, her lovely stormy eves flashing anew, "I should not a bit wonder to Minster Court eyes flashing anew, "I should not a bit wonder if I walked straightway over to Minster Court and retracted to Sir Angus Adair every word of that promise I pledged him this afternoon, Don't be surprised, mother, if that is what I do. I feel, now, as though I could not live another hour with that worldly, sinful promise weighing down my soul. Oh, mother, what have you not made of met

Mrs. Wentworth was genuinely frightened ow. She was never quite sure of Guine-

"Nonsense! You are talking foolishly," she rebuked, in a fretful voice. "Pray do not be reckless, child. Why ruin yourself and your prospects? Why quarrel with your marvellous good fortune? Later-by-and-by-depend upon it, you will like him well enough, and, in time,

positively adore and worship him"—oughing rather nervously—"I dare say."
Guinovere oyed her parent in silent, unfilial scorn; and the girl's large wet violet eyes were full of a meaning and an intent that seemed unpleasantly obvious to the understanding of

. Weatworth.

"Is it probable, think you, mother, that I shall ever really learn to adore and worship Angus Adair, as you extravagantly term it?" Guinevere demanded, in low, bitter, concentrated tones, that were scarcely audible, and yet which were well nigh boiling over, as it were, with hot, ungovernable contempt. "You know full well that I never shall be able to do anything of the kind. It is you, and not I, who are talking foolishly now!"

She turned away abruptly, crushed her hand-kerchief into a ball, and pressed it repeatedly to

her unhappy eyes.

Mrs. Wentworth answered nothing now.
Stooping gracefully, she bit her lip, and picked up from the floor her discarded yellow gloves.

It happened to be market day in Grayminster. The High Street, or market place proper, was thronged from end to end with marketing carts and pavement stalls-stout, clean-looking old country dames, in slapping sun bonnets and wide white spotless aprons, standing about in cool and shady corners, maintaining guard over their baskets of butter and new-laid eggs, and chatting

amicably, as they stood together, in a lingo that might have puzzled a town-bred stranger.

At the top of the street, near the town hall, were to be found yet more old ladies of a similar pattern, queening it over donkey-carts and wicker-pens that were full of struggling poultry, and young fowl especially fatted for killing, all pecking and squabbling and cackling thirstily, one seemingly on the top of another, and with their unlacky tails, mostly, sticking out between the bars of the coops-temptingly tails, some of them, at which passing mischievous urchins would give agoning "tuge" when the stout, clean, old market women were not looking in their direction.

And there were more carts also, etationary outside the tavern doors and gateways, round which the owners and drivers of them were quaffing ale from tall blue and white mugs of apparently mysterious depth-carts as closely and cruelly packed as were the wicker poultry pens upon the pavement edge, only burthened here in a different fashion, in the form of tender young calves fresh from the home-shelter of the cow-stall at the farm, their poor little heavy red and white heads dangling despairingly over the bard tailboards in the broiling morning sun, and with the frail bony legs of them knotted roughly together with cord—young animals with pitiable dumb patience and wondering helpleseness in the dusky purple depths of their pleading eyes. What a barbarous world, those young eyes seemed to say !

Here and there were to be seen a few penned sheep, with surly shaggy dogs that kept them in order; and further along came the fruit stalls, with luscious greengages and newly-gathered plums, all lurking in their meilow ripe-ness amidst a bed of crumpled feru leaves stalls with cut flowers for sale, bound tightly into nosegays brilliant with every rainbow colour, save the green which would have softened them rendered them almost beautiful.

Market day was a busy one for everybody in Grayminster—for Lawyer Mainwaring especially. During the morning hours the swing-doors of his offices were perpetually opening and shutting, admitting or letting out the burly figures of his context. The state of the support of the s Even people-farmers chiefly from the Packington neighbourhood-came over to Grayminster to consult Mr. Mainwaring; and

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Packington was a very much grander and more important place than the sleepy sister borough in which the shrewd lawyer resided, Quite at the lower end of the High Street,

not far from the beginning of the Packington Road stood the lovely old church of St. Eve's; and under the very wing, as it were, of the church itself needled the rectory house of the Reverend Mark Sparrow.

It was quieter at this end of the town, and the seemed lighter and purer. The low brown tiled Rectory always looked cool and inviting, standing there as it did amongst the solemn shadows cast from the walls and buttresses of the gray old church.

From a side street near, neat and lady-like as ever, stepped Ursula Mainwaring.

She crossed over to the Fectory and knocked at the door.

is Mise Dinwiddie at home?" she inquired "Yes, miss," answered the servant.

Ursula entered the cool low hall, with its thoring of Indian matting and faint odour of lavender, and was shown straightway into the Rectory drawing room; and there in the draw-ing room, rather to her surprise, she found together Miss Dinwiddie and Guinevere Went-

The Rector's aunt jumped up and embraced Ursula Mainwaring with much affection. "How very strange," chirped the old lady,

her eyes twinking brightly above her small red nose, "that you, my dear Miss Ursula, should have joined us precisely as we were in the act of speaking of you! Miss Wentworth was just telling me what an age it was since she had seen either you or your sister, Miss Millicent-not, in fact, since the delightful afternoon we all spent in the garden at Ivylands! And as your name was yet on my tongue, Jane opens the door and in you walk! Ab, my dear young door and in you walk! Ab, my dear young friend," cried Miss Dinwiddie, "merely another instance of that quaint old saying about the coming of angels and the fluttering of their wings, don't you know? How do I see you? Pray sit down!"

Ursula assured Miss Dinwiddie preitily that she was quite well, and took a seat by Guiue-

vere Wentworth.

were Wentworth.

"Miss Dinwiddie is right, Guinevere," Ursula remarked gravely. "It does, indeed, seem an age since we saw anything of each other. Really, though, a fortnight ago to day, or a fortnight to-morrow—which would it be, dear?"

Guinevere ruised a slim white ungloved hand; and smoothed back from beneath the brim of her het astrangeless leak as two thread add him.

hat a straying love-lock or two of the red-gold hair. She repeated the movement more than once, slowly, deliberately, under Ursula Mainwaring's very eyes; and the lawyer's elder daughter very eyes; and the lawyer's elder daughter marvelled somewhat at the burning dash of the magnificent diamond hoop scintillating there on

third finger of Guinevere Wentworth's left mand.

"A fortnight to-morrow, I fancy," she answered careleasly. "But it has been through no fault of mine, you know. You have not called, either of you, on mother or me."

Well, I could not persuade Milly to come, to tell you the truth, dear," explained Ursula, with the pretty nalveté and innocence of manner peculiar to her. "Whenever I asked her, she would say, 'Guinevere herself will call scon-there is no occasion for us to go to Ivylands.' Then I too began to think that we should have

you calling soon."
"Did you!" said Guinevere.

And Ursula could not quite understand whether those two brief words implied a question with a double significance, as it were, or were given as a natural and thoughtless sort of answer to what had gone before.

Guinevere, of course, comprehended perfectly why Millicent Mainwaring had kept berself aloof from Ivylands and its immates; and the faint peach colour in the checks of Guinevere darkened

wishly into a pained, crimson flush. Eut her back was to the light, fortunately,
"But you will see Milly herrelf if you wait a few uninutes longer here," went on Ursula; and then she turned to Miss Dinwiddle, and said—

"Milly is our shopping in the town, you know; and when she has finished, she will call in for me and when she has finished, she will call in for me here on her way home. As I myself had nothing particular to do this morning, I thought, dear Miss Dinwiddie," said Ursula sweetly, "that it would be an excellent opportunity for calling on you about the case of poor old Goody Blount. She is very anxious for your vote and interest, and for the vote and good will of Mr. Sparrow as well, if he will be so kind, in the matter of the approaching election amongst the almshouse approaching election amongst the almshouse candidates. One of the cottages is empty, you know, and Goody Blount is, I really and truly believe, the most deserving old lady in the parish."

"Both of my young visitors, then," exclaimed as Dinwiddie rapturously to the drawing-room ceiling, "have come to me on thoroughly bene-volent and Christian errands! Miss Wentworth has been good enough to walk into Grayminster to inform me that her dear mamma and Lady Chumleigh will each of them subscribe to and become a member of the committee of the St. Eve's Winter Clothing Club and Ragged Night School : and I am thankful to be able to report that, with the encouraging and most gratifying assistance which we are meeting with every day, these Christian institutions cannot do otherwise than prosper and flourish exceedingly. Yes, yes, my dear, to be sure," to Ursula, this, and no longer to the ceiling—"your worthy old Goody Blount shall have my vote with all the pleasure in life; and I think that I am perfectly safe in promising you Mr. Sparrow's also. He is out, un-fortunately, this morning, visiting his district. He will be so vexed to have missed you!" declared Miss Dinwiddie.

"Oh, thank you indeed !" cooed Ursula vaguely,

clasping her hands in her lap. "And Milly will be here, you say, soon ?" in-

terrogated Guinevere.

"Yes—so pray do not go," Ursula entreated, earnestly. "She cannot be long now." "I will wait," said Guinevere thoughtfully, her eyes on the carpet. "I should like to see

Then she turned, with a charming smile, to little Miss Dinwiddie.

"May I stay?" she said.
"My dear!" expostulated Miss Dinwiddie, holding up as if in horror her two little bony hands the colour of old ivory, "what a question! How can you ask it! I am delighted to have you —delighted—especially after the kind and welcome message you have brought me from your dear mamma. I do not know how to thank her sufficiently, and you must tell her so, my dear, please, from me."

"I will," promised Guinevere graciously—for none so gracious as she when she chose. "Dear Miss Dinwiddie!" breathed Ursula admiringly.

And then Miss Dinwiddie changed the conver-

sation with a vengeance—at least for Guinevere.

"And have you heard from your brother since
he left Grayminster?" she inquired of Ursula. kindly. "I suppose he has written to some of you, my dear, by this time?" Guinevere, leaning back in the shadow, started

her very heart indeed seemed to stand still.

What strange thing was this ? What did Miss Dinwiddie mean by asking so terrible a question

Scarcely drawing breath now, Guinevere waited for Ursula's reply. It came. "Yes," Ursula Mainwaring said; "father "Yes," Ursula Mainwaring said; "father heard, of course, on the norning after Don had reached Calais, and Milly received a letter from the Borne postmark. him only yesterday bearing the Berne postmark. In it he said that he was just starting for——"
Here Guinevere Wentworth leaned towards

Urula and stopped her even as she spoke.
"Did I hear aright," she managed to say,

whether calmly or otherwise she never knew.
"Has Loudon—has Don—gone away ?"

(To be continued.)

Ir an Egyptian desires a divorce, all he has to do is to repeat three times the words, "I put you from me," and the legal separation is complete.

# CINDERELLA.

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## CHAPTER XII.

Sin Philip was present when Pauline came down to dinner, in all the glories of one of her new toilettes—a black lace dress, with open body, and elbow sleeves—and her pearl neck-lace round her slender white throat. There were a good many other people in the roomtwo or three neighbouring ladies, and their daughters and husbands-Madame Bert, in a daughters and husbands—Madame Bert, in a magnificent magnolia satin, made with severe and artistic simplicity. She was sitting on the sofa beside Sir Philip, eagerly whispering to him behind a large feather fan, but he sprang up when he saw Pauline, and hurried to greet her warmly, standing beside her afterwards instead of returning to his late splendid companion, and the specific of a price agent learning to his late splendid companion, and taking no notice of various signals from that lady's eyes and fan.

He introduced to her his friend-his secretary, as she afterwards discovered, a Mr. Loraineas she afterwards discovered, a mr. Lorane—a very handsome, dark young man, with a singu-larly refined, well-bred face—a face that, putting good looks aside, was interesting to contemplate. It looked as if it had known trouble, but that it was the mask of a proud disposition, one that could " suffer and be strong."

She sat next to him at dinner, and discovered that he had a charming manner, a charming voice, was full of anecdote, repartee and epigram, he had evidently seen a great deal of the world and life, although he was probably younger than Sir Philip by several years.

Still, with all his fascination there was an air of cold reserve about him; he never approached personalities or compliments, never spoke of himself, never touched the outside border of flirtation.

And she rose from the table much attracted, but feeling instinctively that he was really as great stranger to her as when they had first sat down, and that although she was scopathetically affected by him, in despite of herself, he would never give her another thought.

"You lucky girl; you sat uext to Mr. Loraine," said a lively young lady to her in the drawing-room after dinner. "I envied you, I can tell We are all most frightfully smitten, but he is like a block of marble. No one has made an impression even. Isn't it too distressing? He has no vulnerable point, no little weakness for any one.

"Yes, most extraordinary," she returned,

ghing.
He goes everywhere with Sir Philip. He is laughing. his secretary, you know," she gabbled on, pleased with her theme, "but also his greatest friend. I believe he saved his life, or Sir Philip saved his life, a something or other in that style, and he is so charmingly mysterious. No one has ever made out who he really is, or where he comes from, or anything about him, and we are all simply dying with curiosity !"

"How distressing !" exclaimed Pauline, with

ironical smiles.

"Ab, my dear"-her companion had only known her seven minutes by the clock—"you may laugh as much as you like; you will be a victim yourself before long just the same as the

"No, indeed," reddening with a little tinge of consciousness. "I am not so susceptible. Do you mean to say," she demanded, bluntly, "that you are all in love with him?" opening her eyes to their fullest extent.

"Oh, I won't say that. I can't explain it. He, you will know by experience, establishes a most extraordinary influence over you; you feel that you would do anything he wished, that when he is present you think of no one else. Although he is poor, and no one knows anything about him, he has far more influence with people than Sir Philip—even Sir Philip, with all his riches, and country places, and yacht, and carriage and four."

"It must be a kind of mesmerism," she cried, "or else it is the mystery about him

which enhances his charm, or else you must all be mad I

At that instant the door opened, admitting the gentlemen. Sir Philip was at once waylaid by Madame Bert, and his secretary came straight over to the young ladies on the sofa, and took a chair beside Pauline. As he did so, the young lady on the sofa at Pauline's other hand, who had been recently discussing him so frankly, emphasised his arrival by giving Pauline a cruel nudge from her very sharp red elbow.

"What were you talking about in such an engrossing manner!" he asked, as he crossed his legs. RWhat very interesting topic was the subject of conversation? Pray don't let me

interrupt you ? We were talking of-of mesmerism, Pauline, casting wildly about for something to say. She could not tell him they had been discussing him.

"Really; and do you believe in it?" he asked, No. I cannot say that I do," she returned.

"I know nothing about it."

"It was well you added that. Madame Bert is a renowed mesmerist, and would soon convert you. Over some her power is unbounded," glancing aeross at her and his patron, Sir Philip, as they stood by the open piano, in

"I do not wish to be converted," she replied, stiffly, "and I—" Here she paused, discrestiffly, "and I-" Here tion closed her lips for once.

You were going to say something?" he remarked, looking at her expectantly, and survey-ing her calmly with his critical dark eyes.

but I have changed my mind. One should think twice before speaking," she mur-mured, with heightened colour. "Nevertheless I know what you were about to

eay. Shall I tell y-'?"
"If you please," to rejoined, with an incredulous little laugh.

lous little laugh.

He saked carelessly, "You were going to say, 'I don't like Madame Bert,' were you not?" leaning towards her and lowering his voice.

Pauline made no reply to this rude question. It was no business of his.

I see you are vexed with me," he proceeded "but you need not be. Your instinct is a right one," lowering his voice once more. "Beware of She is a dangerous woman." madame.

"And why-why do you tell me this?" she

stammered.
"Hush!" authoritatively, "she is going to
"Hush!" authoritatively and here
sing. I will tell you another time," and here
the chords of the grand piano sounded through
the chords of the grand piano sounded through the room under a practised hand, and the notes of madame's voice came pealing forth.

It was a mavellous organ, so powerful, so trained, so sympathetic!

No wonder every ear in the room was turned

to its outpourings, no wonder that you could hear a pin drop when she paused.

She sang without notes, a ballad first; when that came to an end her fingers strayed into a wild Creole love song, whilet all the time Sir Philip leant over the piano as one bewitched, his eyes absolutely fastened on her face.

Pauline asked herself, with a sense of d humiliation, "could she ever have shame and humiliation, "could she e imagined that he cared for her. Mad the very mistress of his soul, she felt." Madame was kindly remember that she was very young); a buge lump in her throat, an aching her heart, as she realized what a conceited little fool she had been; and still the notes of the singer's exquisite voice rose and fell in the stillness, still she held everyone's emotions as it were in the small hollow of her hand; and then gradually the sounds came fainter, fainter, and fainter, and died away in a dead silence.

"She reminds one of a siren. Does she not!"

said a voice beside Pauline.

She looked up quickly (I am afraid there were tears in her eyes), and met the dark, unfathomable orbsof Mr. Lorraine. Had he read her secret
"Yes, she is a siren, yellow hair and all. Wha she is a siren, yellow hair and all. What

do you think?"

"I know as little about sirens as I do about memerism," she returned coldly. "Pray why should you fancy that she, Madame Bert, is

like a siren?" following her with her eyes as she went towards the open French windows with Sir Philip, who was carrying her fan and wrap with gallant solicitude.

"Because she attracts men in spite of them-selves with her voice, and makes shipwreck of their lives. Is that a plain answer, Countess Pauline !

It was a plain answer, with a vengeance, and painful doubts now became doubly painful cer-

Shortly afterwards, in answer to a signal from Lady Farrington, Mr. Lorraine got up and walked

The next day most of the party at Farrington went for a drive on Sir Philip's drag, Madame Bert on the box—a young cavalry officer and Pauline behind, two other couples also on the roof.

Pauline was resolved to carry a bold front, to show no sign of disappointment, and to smile, and laugh, and be cheerful, and ready to be pleased, and her companion was really most amusing; their laughter was continuous, their conversation incessant,

She remarked that now and then their coachman was listening with a half-averted face, and that he looked rather gloomy, in spite of madame's brilliant endeavours to chain his attention.

They had a tea picnic among the ruins of an old castle, and climbed about in couples, exploring the moat, chapel, tilt-yard, and up its rickety stairs, " to view the landscape o'er leads.

Captain Bohun was still Pauline's companion, and she could see that their host's eyes were constantly travelling in their direction, and, after awhile, he followed them with the whole of his body, and attached himself to their company, as Madame was much exhausted, and had refused to climb the stairs. N.B. (Madame was no chicken.

"Look here, Bohun," he said, "supposing we change partners for awhile? Madame Bert knows your people; she is resting below, and I'll take care of your young lady until tea time, eh i

Captain Bohun did not quite fancy arrangement, nor seize on the exchange with any great cordiality, but he was obliged to submit to it with a good grace; and, returning reluctantly downstairs, left Pauline and Sir Philip on the roof alone.

I'm so glad you managed to come over with

"I'm so glad you managed to come over with Mary," he said, effusively, "and I've not had a word with you yet."

She could not very well say what she thought—that was his fault, not hers—that since his greeting to her in the drawing-room the previous day, he had not once noticed her or opened his lips to her, and had been wholly taken up with Madame Bert, the yellow-haired siren.

Perhaps her ever tell-tale face speke for her. "You seem very much pleased with young Bohun. I heard you laughing nearly the whole way behind ne," he proceeded, leaning his elbows on the stone coping, and surveying her discontentedly. "I never found his society so excessively amusing."
"Did you not?" she exclaimed, saucity, and

resolved to show him that what was sauce for the gander was equally sauce for the goose, "But then you see you are a man, and it's different.

"And you like him?" morosely.

"Yes, very much indeed. He is the most amusing person I have ever met. I'm quite looking forward to our drive back," smiling

"Oh, are you! but I intend that you are to be my companion. Turn about is fair play. I had Madame coming, and it's your turn going home. Let us see if she will find Bohun as amusing," combatively.

"But she came with you," expostulated the young lady, "and she will think she ought to go back with you, and "—frankly looking at him in the face—"don't mind me—it's quite all the same to me."

"I daresay," he rejoined, slightly offended,

but it is not to me, and it's my privilege to choose my partner for the box-seat."

And so the matter was settled, but by no

means to everyone's satisfaction.

Captain Bohun came to Pauline, and threw himself down at her feet in the grass after tea, and said in a grumbling voice,-

"I say, have you heard that Curzon you to drive home with him? I sail it an awful shame—don't you? No end of a sell for me. I'm to have Madame for a change, and she and I are not kindred spirits. What a tongue she has! Arrows of poison are under her lips! She gives me quite a creepy feel, as if there was something uncanny about her, or as if she had the evil eye! What do you think?

"Don't let her mesmerise you, that's all," she remarked, sarcastically.

"Oh, she wouldn't be bothered with mesmeria She is too much taken up with her old ing me. friend, Sir Philip. I'm much too small a fish to be worth frying. She knew him in days of yore. She's madly in love with him—anyone can see that with half an eye. She shows her hand rather too plainly for a clever woman of the world, as she is said to be, and she could stab any other woman that he happens so much as to look at. She's not very fond of you," with a signifi-

cant laugh.

No. Pauline knew that, and Madame's face, frantically as she sought to control her feelings, was a study in white fury as she beheld her handed to her recent post—the box-seat.

However, she restrained herself, and was resolved not to permit Philip to indulge in a têted-tete at any cost.

She ignored her only too wall pleased soldier beside her, and leant over and talked to the poschman most of the way home.
"Do you remember this? Oh, I was forgetting

to tell you that," and dragging in subject after subject with a genius and a perseverance worthy of a better cause, subjects that left Pauline entirely out of the conversation, despite of Sir Philip's efforts and her own.

In skill of this kind-in fencing with these weapons (words), Madame Bert was far, far the superior of them both; and, on the whole, she had succeeded in her aim, and spoiled their pleasant tête-à-tête on the way home most effectually.

"She didn't give you much chance of getting a word edgewise, did she!" said Captain in a word edgewise, Bohun, as he handed Pauline her parasol with a knowing look. "Sha's a clever woman if ever there was one. Too clever by half in my opinion," in a lower voice as she came near.

Ail that evening she again kept Sir Philip in her train. He never even looked at or spoke to Pauline—he hung over the piano, he played ecarté with Madame alone in a room off the drawing-room, whilst the others assembled at a larger table and had a game of Nap.

auline was resolved now to be quite indifferent, if she could, and throw herself heart and soul into what was to her a novel and most exciting amuse ment, and to loose no time in building fool

ish castles in the air.

The next day she was sitting in one of the verandahs late in the afternoon, with a book on her knee, her eyes bent on the beautiful undu-lating park beneath her, and her thoughts very busy with the great change that had taken place in her prospects in such a short time, when all at once she was aware of voices in the room behind her—a writing-room, which opened on the verandah, but from which she was invisible. They were the voices of her hostess and Madame in eager conversatiou.

"I tell you, Marie, that you did me a very ill turn when you brought that girl here. What possessed you to ask her?" said one.

"Philip wished it. He pitied her, poor child, and he likes her."

"Impossible! Don't you imagine that he is taken with her, a hideous, sallow-looking, scraggy girl, with two big black eyes, like holes burnt in et. Philip has more taste, I should Madame's English was blunt and fora blanket. hope ?"

"Well, he wished her to be asked, at any rate,

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perhaps on account of her romantic history, and

"S quite too extraordinary."
"Romantic fiddlestick !" with a contemptnous

Well, my dear Valorie, it is romantie; she is

a Romanoff, and—"
"I don't believe a word of itenot one; all a story trumped up by that old Russian witch, who is at mad as ever she can be in my opinion, and ought to have been in an asylum years ago I

"She is very rich, at any rate, mad or not, and the girl is to have all her money," in an awe-

wished she could get away ; listeners never hear any good of themselves. But to arise and walk out on the verandah they would naturally see her; to enter the room she dare! not, meral courage would not permit her, for they would know that she must have heard all, so she sat with a quickly beating heart, as still as a mouse, and as frightened.

How long is she going to stay !" proceeded

Malame, aggressively.

"Oh! I suppose till after the ball, of coursement Thursday. I can't think why you are so prejudiced, Valerie. I like her, she is a very harmless, unaffected, pretry girl, and if you knew the awful life she had with those dreadful sisters you would be sorry for her, and glad that she should have a little pleasure at last. Captain

It's not Captain Bohun it's Philip. made up her mind to esptirate him, with her innocent airs and infantile graces, and that's what he likes, the modest maiden style," con-temptuouely. "Oh, I see through her game. But she shall never marry him, never, never, never as long as my name is Valerie Bert. I would die sconer. As for her sisters, I wish they had made an end of ter for mer manner, the form of the form o

What has come ever you? You are crazy," in a tone of friendly expostulation.

"I'll tell you, Morie. I know that girl will work me some harm; I have a never failing some that tells me such things. She is the autipodes to my good fortune. She is my evil genius, but I am hers. My powers, my will, are ten times atronger; and in a struggle between us, she will

atronger; and in a struggle between us, she will be destroyed!"

"Valorie, Valerie! you are talking like a French novel." exclaimed her friend, in a voice of mild reproach—a voice that inchied that she was accustomed to these curbursts. "And you know, dear, I am your friend. We were girls and schoolfellows in the old days in Paris at the Sacré Cœur, and I have always adviced you for your good (though you would never profit by it). Let me give you one last bit of advice. Du't think me give you one last bit of advice. Don't think of Philip—give him up."
"Never I" impetuously. "I adore him I

"I adore him ! Nothing shall separate us, nothing come between the is mine and I am his. More than this, us. He is mine, and I am his. More than this, he worships me, when not influenced by that hideous girl. He dares not give one thought away from me, my handsome, talented, distinguished Philip. He shall be mine, and mine

alone 1"
"Valerio, you are talking monstrous nonsense -you are mad! on this subject you are crazy!"
Mad! Am I! I have method in my madness. I tell you, Marie, that I hold him, your brother, in the very hollow of my hand!"

CHAPTER XIII.

A swelled face is neither poetic nor pretty. Madame Bers sat in a draught in the conservatory (with Sir Philip, of course), and got a dreadful cold in consequence, which took this hideous form.

One side of her face was so much swollen that one of her eyes was closed, and the cheek actually loosed as if it were studied with half-a-dozen potatoes.

Under these painful circumstances how could

she present herself downstairs?

She was nearly frantic, as her maid expressed in vulgar but forcible language, "fit to be

To think of such a miserable thing keeping her in her room on the eve of the great ball at Sir Philip's

If it were a broken arm, a broken rib, or even broken leg, she might have appeared. But with such a face it was impossible. Her counten would merely excite ridicule, not sympathy. Her countenance

Whilst she was putting on poultices and hot fomentations in the privacy of her own apart-ment, raging like a wounded tigress, and anothe-matizing her hard fate, Pauline was learning to ride on a soler-minded cob, under Sir Philip's auspices in the park, and enjoying the long deli-cious summer days, not half long crough now —now that Madame was hors de combat. Sie Philip attached himself to her exclusively,

his quarters at his sister's, neve took up evidently, casting a thought to the poor invelid upstairs, though he received as many as five notes from her in the day—notes which, in Pauline's presence, he shuftled into his pocket with some slight embarrassment and heightened colour.

Pauline may be thought a young woman of no spirit in thus allowing herself to be taken up, dropped, and "taken up" again; but Sir Philip was urresistible when he chose, and when he put forth his powers to please who could withstand him? Not Pauline, for the truth must be told, she loved him.

He had been her fast friend since she had come out; he filled her thoughts; he was her ideal.

Foolish and susceptible as she may appear, must be borne in mind that she was an unsophisticated country girl of eighteen; and another truth must be confided, she believed he loved

In half-a-dozen intangible ways he had told

It was the day the day before his ban-ner ball—and they were riding in the park, she without a leading rein new, for she was proving an apt pupil, and could cauter—aye, and trot.
"Pauline," he said, abruptly, taking off his hat and pushing the hair off his forehead, "I feel mather rean since I have known you. I have taught you to ride, but you have taught me a far more important lesson."

And what is that !" she asked shyly.

"To believe in women once more; are single-hearted, sincere, simple-minded-not given to intrigue, treachery, greed of money,

given to intrigue, treatnery, great of place, or position."
"Why how do you know? What do you mean?" she asked, aghast.
"I mean that you are all these, and there are, doubtless, others like you. When I think, too, of the miserable life you have led, like some flower in a cellar, and have suddenly sprung to the light, wealth, and fortune, and that you are unchanged and unspoiled, I will not merely say that I admire you and respect you, Pauline; I will go further, and tell you, what I am sure you know," lowering his voice as he spoke, resting his hand on her horse's crest, and looking down into her bashful eyes, "I will say that I love

You."
To this she made no reply. She felt quite too frightened at her own happiness. She trembled, and could not speak for some

But suddenly over the sun of joy crept a great black cloud of misgiving.

What would Madame Bert say?"

fata !

She raised her eyes to his, and her face was as pale as the white daisies under the horses' hoofs, and whispered,-

What will Madame Bert say !"

A spasm that did not escape her crossed his lips, but he boldly replied,—
"It is for you to say yes, Pauline. She has no power to divide us. She is the last woman in the world I would marry, and she knows

"I don't think so," she stammered; "and you have given her every reason to believe you cared for her. Sir Philip, it is best to be frank with each other, and speak the truth, is it

"It is, and I will imitate you, my darling Pauline. A lie, I know, has never sullied your pure lips. Your eyes alone are very wells of truth. Madame Bert and I are old friends."

He paused expressively.

He paused expressively.

"And she exercises a power over me that I cannot explain; it is there. Once out of her presence I am a free man; in her company I am her fettered slave. I cannot say why. It is no wish of my own. She compels me to go to her, to speak to her, to ait beside her; and the longer I am in her society the spell—for I can call it nothing else—becomes harder and more difficult to break. I am fascinated; I am like a moth drawn to a candle. I shun her company in vain. She follows me. Nothing will release me from her influence but a harpy marrelease me from her influence but a happy mar-riage, and hitherto I have not believed in such things. No! not till I saw you, my Cinderella, asleep in the wood, with tears on your cheek, and then it seemed to me that love was a possibility yet. It sounds like witchcraft or a fairy tale, in the nineteenth century to hear a man like me talking of spells and influence of a woman whom I do not love—whom I do not love," he reiterated, as if impressing the fact upon himself. "My wife must be a pure minded, simple young girl like you, my darling Pauline, and you will

break her spells."
"How can I deliver you? She is far more powerful than I am," she faltered.

"Once you were my wife her spells would avail nothing; she would not thrust herself between us then. Pauline, I love you as my life, I look to you as my good angel. I will devote every thought of my heart to you; I will devote myself to your happiness. It shall be the one aim of my life to prevent a cloud ever crossing your fair face. Pauline, won't you answer me?" he urged, entreatingly.
"Give me till to morrow to think it over," she

said, with averted face.

She did not distrust her own heart. She knew what it would say; but she distrusted Madame, and she was doubtful of his constancy.

Why should he look to her to save him-he who was stronger than a mere girl like her? What was she but an unsophisticated country girl? How could she cope with that finished intriguante, Madame Valerie Bert?

Supposing after they were married she resumed her influence over him, and led him her captive as before? How would it be then?

Sir Philip was very unwilling to grant her twenty-four hours delay, but she was firm, and stood out for her point; and gained it, of course. She would give him his answer at the ball; yes, even after the first dance next evening, and he was to be satisfied, and whit patiently till

The evening of the ball came. Pauline hurried upstairs after dinner to dress, as well as two three other girls who were staying in the

Her lovely "Cinderella" dress, and flowers, shoes, and gloves had been laid out upon the bed by her new maid after she had dressed her for

Her hair was alread, "done," She would not be long in adorning herself, but, oh, horror what did she see as she entered the room, her maid, in her wake ? her lovely white satin and waves of silver tulle one sodden mass of wet! actually wrung out like an old rag, lying over the back of a chair, her sweet little shoes cut to pieces, her gloves, and wreath and fan standing drowned in the wash-hand basin!

She was so overwhelmed that for some minutes she could not speak, whilst her Abigail gave way to loud ejaculations as she picked up one ruined article after another. Who could have done it ? she asked, over and over again, with the mono-tony of a parrot. Her mistress knew.

Madame Bert did not intend that she should to the ball any more than she herself did. She was having too much of Philip's society in her opinion. She had her spies and watchers on the premises.

Pauline's soul was in arms-in a blaze. Go she

would. She would not even mention the wicked trick that had been played upon her. She would pass it over as beneath notice. Madame Bert did not bargain for her having brought a second ball dress to Farrington Court, so she said, very decidedly,-

"Never mind, Sopby, say nothing about it, and hurry quickly and get out my red dress. I will wear that, and just bundle away those wet rage where no one will see them. I should be ashamed for such a trick to be known.

could give a guess at who did it, miss,

"Don't1" she cried emphatically. "I don't

She was soon invested in her other French ball dress, a red tulle skirt, so bouilloune that the effect was cloud-like, a dark ruby velvet bodice, with red tucker, a fringe of diamonds round the top of the bodice (her mother's), a pouff of red feathers in her hair, very long gloves, and broad diamond bracelets.

She was dark, and it suited her well, even better than her Cinderella dress. So she thought herself, and her opinion was endorsed by Sophy, who was rapturous in her admiration.

As she passed along the lighted corridor in all er new grandeur, fan in hand and head in air, a

door was gently opened, and an eye peeped out. She knew the eye well—it was Madame She knew the eye well—it was Madame Valerie's. Without doubt Pauline's appearance caused her to open that malignant optic to its caused her to open that malignant optic to its very utmost extent. She did not pretend to notice her. In passed swiftly on, and when she had gone a few paces suddenly stopped and looked back. She knew she should catch her it was a ruse worthy of Madame herself.

There she was, actually out in the middle of the passage, regardless of her own appearance, of her dressing-gown, of her much tangled yel-low hair (which, by-the-way, was dyed), staring after Pauline with the expression of the most unmitigated amazement and discomfiture and clenched hands.

Pauline paused, smiled, nodded in her most amiable manner. This was adding oil to the

fames with a vengeance.

She made no response—she simply stood and glared, and then Pauline turned on her heel and ran quickly downstairs and joined the party assembled in the hall with a sense of triumph for once swelling her bosom, and a conviction that for once (it might be the first and last time) she had got the better of the woman who said she was her "evil genius."

## CHAPTER XIV.

Norming could be more splendid than Sir NOTHING could be more splended than Sir Philip's ball. It even put the Duchess of Dover's completely in the shade; but we will not linger to describe it more than to say that nothing was wanting to secure perfection—floor, lighting, band, supper, guests, flowers, fountains, tent, everything was there that taste could devise and wealth could procure; and all the county, and many outsiders from London and elsewhere, were present. were present.

Pauline had made up her mind after due reflection. She was not going to be afraid of Madame. She meant to accept Sir Philip, and take the consequences. She had no wish to return to live with her sisters from year's end to year's end. She would marry Philip and inter-lose her love between him and the Frenchwoman, and she said "yes" before the third dance had been danced.

As they sat side by side in a lobby, dimly lit up by coloured lanterns, Mr. Loraine passed by, and looked at them hard. She had seen very little of him—he rarely accompanied his patron, friend, or master to Farrington Court. He stayed at home and worked, by all accounts. Did she allow her imagination to run away with her when she thought she discerned in his glance commisseration and regret

After a little while her newly betrothed lover was obliged to return to his numerous duties as host. She did not accompany him to the ballroom. She wanted to stay alone and think over and realise her new position; and as she sat there, her eyes fixed on the floor, her big bouquet Philip's gift) lying in her lap, her lips half parted in a happy smile, she was aware that some one was standing before her, and speaking and trying to attract her far away thoughts, and looking up quickly saw Captain Bohun and a very fair, mildlooking little man beside him, whose eyes were fixed on herself.

"The Count De Bodisco wishes to be presented to you," waving forward his friend, who bowed with the most profound respect. "I'm engaged for this dance," he continued, "so I'll leave you bere, Bodisco, and don't forget Number Seven, Countess Pauline."

She had hardly got accustomed to her strange name yet, and there was another change awaiting her. She would be Lady Curzon before very

Her answers to her new acquaintance were rather dreamy and abstracted, though he be-came every instant, if possible, more deferential and polite

He probably was inwardly annoyed at her in-attention, and at length found a way of rousing

her most thoroughly.

"You and I have a bond in common, Countess Pauline," he said, in dulect tones. "I do not allude to your mother's birth, but to another kind of tie," he added, in a tone of deep signi-

'Indeed! and pray what is that?" she asked,

bluntly.
"Merely," looking her full in the face with steel grey eyes, "that we both belong to the same society, the Hand of Justice. You are a sworn

member, like myself, are you not ?"
The Hand of Justice! That hideous nightmare she had all but forgotten; that she some-times told herself must have been some horrible -that it was impossible that such a society could exist now, in the nineteenth century, and it was preposterous that she should belong to it when she did not even know its aim—the reason of its existence.

"We have had our eye on you for some time," he continued, coolly, and now that she came to look into his face it was not meek and mild, but lined and hard, and resolute, and there was a curious brown spot in the pupil of one of his metallic-looking eyes. "You have great advantages; a young, pretty, and rich member is always useful, especially in-in some cases," "You are going to marry Sir Philip

Curson too," he added.
"How do you know that?" she asked,

haughtily.

"Really it requires no great penetration to read that secret, my dear young lady," he re-turned, contemptuously; "who runs may read. Strange that you should enchain one who has lightly distanced record many lights, but here's lightly fluttered round many lights, but never been caught. It is strange, too, that you should be Pauline Dormanoff's daughter," surveying her critically, "and have come across her countrymen in that little adventure of yours at The world is small."

"A little adventure that I wish you would be to forget," she exclaimed, imploringly. Why remind me of it? I want nothing from the society. I do not even know its aim. I will keep the secret of its existence as I would my life, and let it forget mine. What good can I do you? I am too insignificant and too young

Ah, ha, ha!" and he laughed a low laugh of malicious amusement. "So you would have us forget you, Pauline! We could not be so un-gallant; it would be out of the question. You are one of our members, we never forget that, nor do you. You are in the toils, and nothing por do you. can release you; besides, you should have the great cause more at heart.

"I don't even know what it is ?" irritably.

"The cause of liberty."
"What kind of liberty?" she demanded.
"Political liberty," he replied, laconically.
Here the approach of one of her latest part.

pers brought this conversation to a close, and the Count rose, bowed profoundly, and said, in a tone of latent meaning only intelligible to

"Au revoir, Countess;" bowed once more, with his hand on his heart, and disappeared in the crowd.

He had completely spoiled the evening for his confederate, and taken the edge off all her happiness.

She saw everything no longer couleur de rose, but through a blurred fog of doubt and apprehension, and she dared not share her hateful secret with Philip; such imprudence she know would cost her her life. With all her late good-fortune some very

wicked and malignant fairy godmother had evidently been present at her christening, that

Philip railied her on her gravity, and pressed her closely for the reason of her altered looks and her banished smiles, but what could she tell him ?

As they danced, or as they stood aside, she saw ever the eyes of that hateful Count du Bodisco watching them with stealthy satisfaction following them round the room.

Madame Bert had one weakness more prominent than another, and that was a love of money
-a greed and a grasping that nothing could

satisfy, nothing appears.

At this critical time she received a summons to France.

Money, a large sum -- her idol -- was in jeopardy. Her presence on the spot without an hour's delay.

A venerable relative was dying, not a few would-be legatees were hovering like vulturez-round her bed, waiting with ill-concealed impa-tience till the breath was out of her body.

Madame Bert had immense expectations; and without losing an hour, without a thought of her swelled face, she wrapped herself up, veiled her unlucky countenance in triple veils, and was some crossing from Dover to Calais, her present anxiety swallowing up every other thought—even

Philip.

She left before they had returned from the she left believed they autumn norning, consequently she did not hear the news, nor had she had any idea that matters had progressed so far between Philip and Pauline as to suppose that he would propose to her on such a short acquaintance-he who was so wary.

The bride elect returned to Mount Rivers in Sir Philip's drug to make her last stay under her sisters roof, and to inform them of her engagement.

engagement.

They pretended (with ill-success) to be immensely delighted at the news, but in reality they were devoured with envy, hatred, and malice. They spent very little time in her malice. They spent very little time in her society, and indeed she did not regret in. She was mostly out riding or driving with

Philip, and did not miss her two bitter, vindictive looking relatives.

There was now an air of mystery about them What plot that struck her more than once. What plot could they be hatching? They interchanged looks, whispers, stole noiselessly from the room, made signs behind her back, and behaved alto-

gether very strangely.

Once she met Mattis, tray in hand, on a landing; there were bottles on the tray, and glasses. a plate, and bones. She looked rather confused. Once she casually remarked an intolerable smell of bad tobacco, and they both looked excessively put out and disturbed, and then volubly declared that it was "Thomas, the man servant, smoking in the pantry."

More than once she was made very uncomfortable as she sat alone in the drawing-room, by the conviction that somewhere-where she could

the conviction that somewhere—where she could not say—an eye was watching her stealthily.

It gave her a most serie and unpleasant sonsation, especially in the dusk. She never could discover it, but knew instinctively that it was

there, constantly on the watch.

Her aunt had cordially given her consent to the wedding. She was coming over to it, if posei-ble, and sent her her trousseau and some spieniewels for the corbeille.

It was to be soon. Sir Philip wished to spend the autumn abroad, and they had nothing to wait for. The sooner Pauline got away from her hateful sisters, and was launched in her new

lenge.

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life, in Philip's opinion, the better, and in Pauline's, too. CHERDI SURI

They were engaged just one month, and then they v vere married, that so they had not much time for finding out each other's shortcomings. We will not say that Pauline carried off the best match within these counties without a chal-

It was rumoured there was a good deal of heartburning among mothers with grown-up, un-married daughters. She was called "an adventuress," "a foreigner," and many other names, and, indeed, if the truth were known, her own kind sisters listened with greedy ears to many critical comments on her face, her fortune, and

her family.

"She was not a Rivera. No, no," they de-clared, "no more than she was a princess of the blood Royal. She was a foreigner, to her very funcer-tips, and Sir Philip was a rash man."

The happy pair did not have a quiet wedding; the fairy godmother put her veto on that.

was to be a magnificent breakfast, and at least one hundred guests; the expense, of course, to be borne by her, and her alone,

The sisters were not averse to this, and threw themselves into that part of the business with great energy, and undertook invitations and preparations, and the sending of large orders and the outlay of large sums of money con amore

The princess arrived as abruptly as usual just

the day before the ceremony.

"I forgot that there was no one to give you away, child," she said, as she accosted her niece;
"so I made an effort and came over. I've brought half Covent-garden down with me, and six extra men to wait. I wish my niece to have a suitable marriage; one that will be talked of for many a day.

And doubtless it was. Sir Philip was a large landed proprietor, a popular landlord; his mar-

riage was a great social event.

The path to the church was strewn with flowers, beautiful arches crossed the roads at various points, flags and banners hung above the village street.

The bells rang all day, and everybody took The beits rang an uay, and crowded to see the ceremony, and crowded to see the ceremony. First came dozens of grand carriages, with footmen and coachmen half smothered in white bouquets, and with very grand people inside, who filled up most of the church. Then came eight preity bridesmaids in cream lace dresses, and bouquets of poppies and cornflowers; then the bride's two sisters, in superb crimson toilettes (silched from the money for the wedding breakfast); then the bride and her aunt in a carriage with four greys; "the aunt looking like an old Iniry, y," the people said, with her pointed chin, gold-headed stick, her keen little dark eyes. pointed chin. her diamonds - how they blazed! walking beside her the tall, young bride, in a splendid white bridal dress, with a long brocaded velvet train, wreath, veil, diamond stars, and diamond necklace, rich jewels, as befitted the heiress of the Princess Dormanoff !

So they were married, and after the dejeuner left Mount Rivers amidst a storm of good wishes and rice and slippers, leaving the bride's aunt standing a prominent figure on the steps between her two intensely humiliated sisters. She waved than a fluttering good-bye with her hand-kerchief, and need we add that she did not shed a tear ! She was like the real Cinderella in the fairy tale, leaving them and her old life of drudgery behind her, and she was married to the

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# CHAPTER XV.

THEY went abroad for their honeymoon, and Pauline was as happy as a real fairy princess in a fairy tale; everything seemed to have fallen into her lap-love, fortune, friends, and, if her mirror

was to be believed, beauty.

She was the object of Sir Philip's devotion. She had no wish, no thought ungratified. She saw the world under the most favourable auspices. They visited Rome, Naples, Florence, and spont.

They visited Rome, Naples, Florence, and spont.

There was one person who pitied and did not the winter in a charming old palace, at the latter despise her, and that was Mr. Loraine.

place, returning to London for the season, and

for Philip's duties when Parliament assembled. She had almost forgotten Madame Bert, and entirely had forgotten the Count de Bodisco. She endeavoured to forget her amiable sisters. She had quite left her past behind her, and commenced a new career.

No one would recognize her now-mistress of a splendid town mansion, a retinue of servants, of more carriages and horses than she could use, of more jewels than she found occasion to wear. ed many friends, and was one of the queens of society, and a great social success; ease of manner and deportment came to her quite naturally, inherited, no doubt, from her foreign mother.

Her happiness was at its zenith all through this first year, but it was too much, too unalloyed; it did not last. The first blow dealt to her by that fickle jade, Dame Fortune, was the birth and death of a son and heir. immediate could see, although he did his best to disguise his feelings, was a bitter disappointment to Sir who was anxious for a direct successor to the family title and immense estates, but two years elapsed, and they were not blessed with other children.

Lady Curzon's health was wretched, she lost her spirits, she lost her looks, and began to feel a terrible suspicion creeping over her that, worse than all, she was losing Philip's love.

She was not able to go out with him now, to ride in the park, to drive on his coach, to accompany him to brilliant gatherings, political or social. She no longer deserved to be called "the beautiful Lady Curzon;" her features were beautiful Lady Curzon;" her features were sharpened, her complexion sallow, her eyes hol-low, and her figure attenuated and shrunken.

She saw this change plainly reflected in her Alas! she saw it reflected in her mirror. husband's face; it expressed no sympathy, only surprise and chagrin at first, and then indifference. She shut her eyes to this awful dread, but she could not keep it away for ever.

Sir Philip would come to her room before dress. ing for dinner and talk a little, and tell her the club news and fashionable chit-chat of the day, but he would not stay long. He seemed to come more as a duty than as a pleasure, to himself to a certain very limited period, and then burry rapidly away after one hasty kiss; whilst she, who had been lying all day long alone and wearying on her sofa for his footsteps, had been counting the hours, the moments, till she saw him, making up witty little speeches for his benefit in her own mind, framing questions she yearned to, but dared not, ask (for Philip had, when he chose, a reserved mood, that no one ventured to intrude upon); and it was this strange, ever-growing reserve, that seemed growing up between them like a very wall of ice—so cold, so solid, so impassable, that she was powerless to break down.

What had caused this change !- this gradual, imperceptible change, that had stolen away her happiness like the creeping, ever-advancing tide upon the sea-shore?

Was it her feeble health, her loss of looks Was it that he had already tired of her ?

He seemed to have now no thought apart from his parliamentary duties, to live and breathe in political life alone.

She read his speeches not once, but twice, and thrice; devoured them with mingled pride and for she blamed them for a share of her husband's neglect.

Yes, it had come to that neglect.

He was always either shut up writing busily in his library, or in the House, and ten minutes daily was all the time he could accord to his onceadored Pauline.

What a triumph for her sisters were they to see her now, fallen from her high estate !

No doubt every servant in the house knew that No nonot every servant in the none and we have things were not as they ought to be, and discussed their mistrees's altered looks, and pitted and perhaps despised her!—a wife who, in two short years, had sunk down to be a mere cipher in her husband's eyes.

She read it in his eyes, though his words were few, and she saw him but rarely.

Once she came unexpectedly across him as she tottered to her carriage on the arm of her faithful Sophy; the wreck of what she had once

He was coming out of the library and paused; he really looked quite shocked, as his eyes took in her greatly altered appearance, and realised that this haggard, feeble, ghastly-looking young woman was actually the once radiant Lady Curzon, the beauty of a season.

He came at once to her, and, offering his arm, led her carefully, kindly, down the steps, and stood, hat in hand, as she was gently driven from

She drove round the park at little better than a foot pace, with Sophy as her vis-à-vis, her eyes groedily taking in the brilliant greenery to which they had long been such strangers—long, wearily, with one monotonous

wall-paper. Presently they came near the Row. Carriages flashed rapidly past them, full of parasols and beaming faces, and then they were obliged, owing to a block, to pause, and proceed at a slow walk

She was gazing out on the brilliant rhododendrons and flower-beds with a half-abstracted gaze, when she suddenly felt Sophy give a violent, as if guilty, start, and looking at her quickly saw that

she was crimson.

"Oh, my lady i" she exclaimed, with an awk-ward laugh. "Look at those beautiful horses there, the greys-coming this way."

Why should Sophy suddenly wish to attract her attention? What did she care for horses she who had the finest and highest steppers in the park ?

Her suspicions were aroused, and instead of looking in the direction indicated she looked exactly the other way, and saw Sophy's reason for becoming so red, and foolishly endeavouring to attract her notice elsewhere.

There, under a tree, their chairs touching (her parasol half held over his head,) sat her husband and Madame Bert.

Here, in one instantaneous blinding flash, was revealed the reason of the barrier he had erected between them; and so whilst she, the invalid wife, lay at home wearying for his pre-sence, and counting the clock, he was all the time sunning himself in the smiles of her evil

genius, Madame Valerie Bert.
Pauline stared blankly at the couple, with dilated, incredulous eyes. They looked extremely

Madame was dressed in white, and appeared younger and fresher, and more attractive than she had ever seen her. There was a whole world of confidence, familiarity, and absolute devotion in the pose of the pair that went as a very dagger heart.

to her heart.

To his country, to politics, to fame she would relinquish Philip, to Madame Valerie never; but she had no choice. Common sense, her own conviction, told her the truth. Madame Bert was in the ascendant now; she had the ball at

Philip was more her slave than ever, and yet once he had implored his wife to stand between her and him, had deplored her fatal fascination, and had declared that he shrank from her. I' looked like it to-day certainly, she said to herself ironically, fierce anger and jealousy running through her veins in a scorehing tumult, but she did not lose her head, nor her self-restraint. She had become very white; she could not help that. But she looked Sophy steadily in the face, and leaning back in the carriage said nothing.

The next day she again ordered the brougham, again drove in the park, which now had a fatal fascination for her, without Sophy this time. Her sympathetic eyes were mad-

dening. Madame Bert was on the box of Sir Philip's drag, and the cynosure of all eyes. As his wife drew up in a block, two daudies leaning over the rails were discussing the passers by, and one of them said, as he arranged his eye-glass to his satisfaction .-

"I say, there's Madame Bert on the box of

Curzon's drag again; it's the third time this week. Coming it strong, eh?"

"Oh, that's nothing?" returned the other. "He half, or more than half, lives at her house in Queen-street. She was an old love, and it's the most remarkable case of infatuation I've ever seen—a red-haired elderly woman."

"But I thought he had a wife! That he was

"So he had, or has—a foreign woman, with tons of money; but she's a cripple, or mad, or comething. Anyway, she never shows now."

Pauline had been an invalid for six months.

Alas! how soon she had dropped out of the world, and out of people's memories. Who would have believed a year ago that she would have been forgotten already? But such is

"I wonder what she thinks of this," con-tinued the first speaker, "and how she likes it?" pointing with the end of his cigarette towards the fast-receding coach and its freight, and then twirling the cigarette carefully between his finger

"I expect she has to like it," said his com-panion, "and to grin and bear it, like other women. That's about the long and the short of it. Curson had the reputation of not being a tremendous ladies' man, but very hard to be caught; for that very reason he is just the very class of fellow that a clever, unscrupulous woman top of her bent.'

At this moment Mr. Loraine passed, and caught sight of Pauline, and came at once to the car-

riage window.

He knew that she knew the truth now; he saw it in her ghastly face and quivering lips, that were vainly endeavouring to smile a friendly, society smile of indifferent unconcern, but they failed miserably.

The fox in her case would not be concealed. He was tearing her very heart out, like the

Spartan boy!

What is so agonizing as the first pangs of well-founded jealousy, when the sharp, keen truth is realised in all its bitterness that he or her on whom every thought of your heart has been bestowed, whom you have loved, alse! better than your come and the heart well. than your own soul, has bestowed all his love, once yours, on another ?

It is a calamity you cannot contend with or fight against. He has no more love to give you even if he would. It has all gone out of his own keeping. He is as powerless as you are. This conviction had come home to Pauline

Mr. Loraine stood and looked at Lady Curzon, with one hand on the window of the brougham. He evidently could not find anything appro-priate to say at once. He was not prepared to mdale

His dark, keen eyes looked quickly away from hers, as if he feared to meet them-as if he was ashamed to face her; but this awkward silence could not continue, and at length he observed,—
"The Park is very full this evening, is it

Very full;" she echoed, mechanically.

"I wonder you don't prefer a country drive," proceeded. "It would do you far more good he proceeded. than this crawling up and down the Row. You get no air here. Richmond would be better, or Blackheath."

Would it ?" indifferently.

"Yes; say down to Kew or Richmond, and in carriage, you know, not this close thing.

You look very seedy still, Lady Curzon, I'm sarry to say. You ought to go somewhere for a change—you ought, indeed."

'I'm better—getting better," she answered, slowly, "and I like to come here where I can see the world and his wife—or, rather, the world and every one else's wife, is it not?" looking at him significantly. She was fast regaining her him significantly. She was fast regaining

"I should have thought you were tired of this sort of thing," he replied, jerking his head towards the crowded Row, and the streams and streams of carriages and gaily-dressed people on foot; "that it was not your line."

"Oh, no," she answered, looking him full in

the face, "I never tire of the Row, and there is always something new to see new people. I-I like to know what's going on," she added, ex-

pressively.

"Do you?" he answered, in a tone of veiled significance. "Remember that you should never and only the half of lieve anything you hear, and only the half of

what you see."
"Then seeing, in your opinion, goes for next to nothing. Seeing is not believing," she exclaimed, with voiled sarcasm.

"No, not always. Appearances are sometimes

deceitful."

"Ah, there is no arguing with you," she re-turned, with a shrug. "You would keep me in a fool's paradise, but meaning to be kind; it would be no kindness. I like to know the truth, and I know it now," emphatically. "Please tell the coachman to drive home."

And, with a slight bow of dismissal precluding any further conversation, she was soon driving

when Philip returned and paid his usual visit he found her on the sofa. He did not ask, nor did he dream, that she had left it.

In fact, it is possible that she believed he had come to fancy that she would remain on it for the remainder of her natural life; consequently, she did not volunteer any information with regard to what she had discovered in the Park.

Whether it was that what she had seen had aroused her eleeping energies into new vitality we are not prepared to say, but she began to get -slowly, but surely.

Lady Farrington, who now and then came to see her, was surprised at the improvement in her strength.

She could walk about a room once more though

very feebly.
"My dear Pauline," she exclaimed, after surveying her with a long, critical stare, "I am to see this-more glad than I can tell you. " I am glad to see this—more glad than I can ten you.

to see this—more glad than I can ten you.

must now really exert yourself, and go out—
gradually, of course—with Philip. It does not
do to give one's husband too much liberty, esget into mischief if they are not looked after, she added, with a rather forced little laugh.

"Yes, I will take your advice," returned Pauline, quietly, "and, like Mrs. Dombey—or, rather, not like Mrs. Dombey—I will make an effort. I must hear Patti before the end of the season, and she sings on Thursday. Will you come with me? Our box is empty night after

But Philip will go with you," said his sister,

decisively.

He may, and he may not. There will be plenty of room for all. I shall expect you, so don't disappoint me for R Barbiere."

I cannot go, for I have two or three friends coming to dinner. Suppose you come with me to our box-if Philip can't come-and you shall run away whenever you like, Frank will take you home

To this her sister-in-law agreed, and the day before, having now emerged from her room and invalid retirement, and met her much-astonished husband on the stairs, she told him that she really felt so much better she should like to go and hear Patti the following evening. "Could he take her !

"It would be madness!" he exclaimed, emphatically, following her into the drawing-room as he spoke, where they found Mr. Loraine

absorbed in a paper.
"Do you hear this, Loraine? My wife just out of her room after months of illness, wants to go to the opera to-morrow night. She who has never been out even for a drive.

Oh, but I have," she remonstrated, " several

"You have! And you never told me!" in a voice of vexation. She did not like to retort "you never asked." I have been out driving, and I am sure it

will do me no harm. I can come away early. I do want to hear Patti, before the season is over. I am so fond of Patti," she argued.

Preposterous ronsense! You have heard her twenty times, and anyway, I could not take you to-morrow night; I have far too

much to do at the house. I shan't be able to get away before one or two in the morning. You and late hours are ridiculous for an invalid ! You have no sense

And so saying he turned to Mr. Loraine, and began discussing some paper that was to be drawn up and prepared without delay, evidently considering the subject dismissed and done with But Pauline was a pertinacious young woman. It was Patti's last night, and she was resolved to go and hear her, and made up her mind that the would go with Mary Farrington, and sent her a note to that effect. Her husband was dining out en garçon. He never dined at home now, and was a much sought-after and popular man. He was not aware that she still held to her project, but came in dressed for dinner, as she at alone in the drawing-room preparatory to her solitary repast.

"So sorry. Pauline, to leave you," he said, with unusual good nature; "but you see, I accepted these invitations days and weeks ago, and I could not get out of going to old Brass's to-night, as he is one of my own party. I shan't be home till one or two, for I have no end of business down at the house that I must get through, no matter what happens. I'm getti ready my speech for to-morrow, and I want to consult a lot of books and statistics. So good-night!" Waving his hand with a benedictory gesture, he opened the door and departed.

An hour and a half later saw Pauline also

departing for the opera, wrapped in her sables,

and inside her little brougham.

She went first to Mary's and followed her party, and entered the opera in their company They were a little late, but soon quietly settled down into their respective seats.

settled down into their respective seats.

Lady Curson sat in front, as befitted her rank and position between Mary and a pretty young married lady friend; behind them were Sir Frank Farriogton, her friend's husband, and a great social celebrity noted for his good atories. Little did she know that she was about to afford him a subject, she and her determine the state of the seat of the s domestic concerns.

At first their eyes were riveted on the stage but after the first act she began to look about the house, and to notice familiar faces.

She glanced casually across at her own box, expecting to see it empty, of course; but whose was the woman's white arm concealed behind the curtain ! and who was her companion ?

She snatched up Mary's opera-glasses to see if her jealous suspicions were well founded. At first her hands trembled so violently she could not steady them; at last she got the lens fixed, at last she saw — Yes, although they were at last she saw — Yes, although they were aiting rather back in the box, and courting concealment, she saw Madame Bert and her busy

So this was what he called preparing for his speech, and reading up statistics, in the House of Commons ?

Little did he know that she was watching him, but such blissful ignorance was not to be his for long. Madame Bert saw her, and she observed his opera-glasses pointed full on their box. Not a few clever people subsequently discovered "the situation."

Mary Farrington looked conscious, embarrassed, and nervous, and cast not a few sidelong depre-cating looks on her sister-in-law from behind her fan, but she alarmed herself needlessly if she imagined that she would make a scene, and fly shricking round to the two delinquents in the opposite box, and rend her rival from her place. No, she said nothing; in fact, save for her deadly pallor (now habitual) she looked nothing, but kept her eyes fastened on the stage, presumably unconscious of her opposite neighbours, with a neutral, expressionless countenance. Her party left early, and, by a malicious stroke of fate, so did Philip and Madame Bert. They, of course, met face to face in the lobby, she, leaning on Sir Philip's arm, accorded Lady Curzon a patronising not to say exultant bow, and swept downstairs, with her long satin train streaming lazily after her, like the tail of a long white spake, which she embodied in Pauline's angry-nay, more than angry-imagination.

Mr. Loraine, who had been in the stalls, appeared on the scene in time to see her exit, and took in the whole situation at a glance.

He put Lady Curzon into her carriage, and, as she declined to go home with Mary, and refused Frank's escort "to talk it over," as her sister had autreated, in a low whisper. No, she was resolved, she would go home alone.

was resolved, she would go home alone.

She found her husband had actually arrived before her, and was astonished to see him standing with his back to the empty drawing-room grate, apparently waiting for her, with an appearance of gloomy anticipation. Conscience makes cowards of us all.

(To be continued.)

## FACETLE.

NELLIE: "He told me his happiness depended on my answer." Edith (sympathisingly): "And—and so you had to give him up?"

Mus. Browns (pointedly): "I wouder what kind of bonnets will be worn this spring?" Browne (firmly): "Last year's, my dear."

BINKS: "Winkers is a great friend of yours, isn't he !" Jinks (a man of the world): "Can't say. I haven't had to borrow money since I knew him."

Visitor: "Sorry to find you here, old chap, Badly hurt?" Patient: "Yes, I am afraid I am. I heard the doctor say I was a beautiful case."

Brown: "Is Madame Spaghetti a really firstrate singer?" Jones: "I don't think she can be. I never saw her name among the scap restimonials."

First Tramp (running): "Do you know the name of that dog?" Second Tramp (increasing pace): "I should say it was 'Posterity,' by the way he comes after ua."

"HARRY," she said, reluctantly, "I don't think I should make a good wife for a poor man."
"Then you'd make a mighty poor wife for a good man," replied Harry, as he fled.

"Scribble has to keep his verses travelling from one magazine publisher to another, and yet he will have it that they are real postry."

"Maybe they're the poetry of motion."

Magistrars: "If you were there for no dishonest purpose why were you in your stocking feet?" Barglar: "I heard there was sickness to the family, your worship."

At Cowes.—Neilie: "How is one to distinguish the yachtsmen from the visitors?" Jack: "That's easy enough; the visitors all have on yachting caps, while the yachtsmen wear straw hats."

Passenger: "Guard, was that last station Bleecker?" Guard: "Yes." "Why the deuce didn't you call it plainer?" "What'd to the use o' me callin' it Plainer when it's named Bleecker?"

WITHERE : "I say, did you recommend that cook of ours to my wife?" Plankington: "Yes, I believe so." Witherby: "Well, I wish you would come round to night and take dianer with us."

"Well," said Snaggs, "I think many dogs have more sense than their masters." "Yes," chimed in Craggs, "I have a dog like that myself." (And yet he couldn't make out why they laughed.)

EDITH: "Sometimes you appear really manly, and sometimes you are absolutely effeminate. How do you account for it?" Harold (after thinking it over): "I suppose it is hereditary. Half my ancestors were males, and the other half females."

Young Wire (in tears): "Oh, Gerald! What do you think? The causry has gone to laying eggs!" Unfeeling Husbard: "I don't see anything heart-breaking in that. It's a perfectly proper thing for the causry to do." "Yes, but Fve always called it lien!" "Well, you can call it Ben Hur now."

FRIEND: "Now that you have made milkions, what will you do?" Old Bullion: "I shall retire, and amuse myself telling people what a burden wealth is, and how happy I was when I was poor."

"I BELIEVE John will propose to night, ma. If he does, what shall I say?" "Accept him, of course." "Yes, but what shall I say first?" "How long have you been expecting this proposal?" "Two years." "Well, I don't know what you can say except 'This is so sudden!"

Long-Haired Visitor (entering timidly): "I have here a little poem written on anow, and—" Editor (interrupting hastily): "Written on enow! We can't use anything that isn't written on paper. Sorry. Turn the knob to the right. That's it. Good morning!"

"Bec your pardon, sir, but you seem to be staring at me in a strange fashion. Do you see anything about me that is familiar to you?" said an irate old gentleman in a street car. "Yes, I do," replied his neighbour. "I see my umbrella that I lost at a restaurant last week."

"Warres, I want a dinner for two," said a happy bridegroom. "Vill ze lady and gentleman haf table d'hore or a la carte!" "Bring us some of both and put lots of gravy on 'em," said the bridegroom, generous to a fault, but weak in French.

ELDER SISTER: "Come, Clarence—take your powder like a man 1 You never hear me making any complaint about such a little thing as that." Clarence (nourly): "Neither would I if I could daub it on my face; it's the swallerin' it that I don't like."

SCRIBBLES: "I notice you often use the words 'queer" and 'funny in the same sense. I wish you would start a comic paper." Gotrox: "You do?" Scribbles: "Yes, I do. The publishers of those now in existence invariably characterise my jokes as queer, but I haven't been able to find one that says they are funny."

"You see," remarked the amateur angler, "wa left the inn with a lunch hamper, two bottles of the best, and our fishing tackle." "Have pretty fair sport!" ventured the guests. "Fair! Glorious! Only at the start some beggar stole our—" "Hamper, eh?" "Oh, no, not so bad as that! Only our fishing tackle!"

ELDERLY gentleman to a little boy who is buying toffee: "My young friend, don't you think that instead of spending all the pennies you get it would be better to put some of them away for a rainy day?" Little Boy: "Oh, no! What's the good of money on a rainy day? Ma never lets me stir out of the house."

A CONCRIED young country parson, walking home from church with one of the young ladies of the congregation, add, in allusion to his rustic audience, "I preached, this morning, to a congregation of asses." "I thought of that," observed the lady, "when you called them beloved brothren."

It was their first quarrel, and the Duke was obviously madder than a March hare. The Duchess, late of America, acted tired. "It makes me feel cheap," sunried his Grace, "when I think of my marriage," She laughed incredulusly. "I'm sure I don't see why you should," she said, "Pa met your own terms without a quibble."

When the train made its first stop after leaving home, Mr. Simpkins, who had been in a brown study for several minutes, raised his eyes which had a troubled look in them, and remarked, "My dear, are you sure we haven't forgotten anything?" "Of course we haven't," responded the good lady, cheerfully. "I would have thought of it the minute the train had started."

On one occasion the driver of a prison van distinguished himself by his ready wit. A would-be wag, on the footpath, hailed him with: "Got any room inside, Robert?" "There's room for one," replied the driver, "We've kept it for you." Not entirely disconcerted, the wit made another shot. "What's your fare?" he asked. The answer, however, entirely extinguished him, for the driver replied: "Bread and water—same as you had before."

It was little May's first Sunday at church, and she thought herself a very important little personage. At the end of the service the bags were handed round as usual for the collection, and shortly after the congregation left the church. When they got out, May surprised her mother by saying, "Mamma, what did you get out of that lucky-bag! I got sixpence!"

In the coffee-room at an hotel in Dublin, an Irish gentleman said to a friend who was breakfasting with him, "I'm sure that's my old college friend, West, at that table over there." "Then why don't you go over and speak to him?" said his friend. "I'm afraid to," replied the other, "for he is so very shy that he would feel quite awkward if it wasn't he."

Eastean Man: "Talking about hail storms, the East is still ahead. Why, eir, only a month ago hail stones fell here as big as eggs." Western Man (off his guard): "Eh! What's that! Big as eggs!" Eastern Man (oalmly): "Yes, air; big as hen-eggs, ir." Western Man (recovering himself): "Oh! Only hen-eggs? I thought you meant ostrich-eggs."

"Can I get you and your orchestra to play at my soirée, next Thursday night?" said Mrs. Parvenu. "Certainly," replied the leader of the orchestra. "Well, you may consider yourself engaged. But I want to make arrangements to hire you by the piece, do you understand? The last time I engaged you by the hour and yourmen took advantage of it and played slow, soft things most of the time."

"William," said Mrs. Youngwife from the head of the stairs to her husband, who had come home at an early hour in the morning, "there is some of my homemade cake in the pautry, a new kind that I made to-day. I put it where you can easily find it." "All right, dear," espended Mr. Youngwife; "how considerate of you! I might have eaten some of it without thinking." And the grateful husband made a supper of cold beef.

A MASTER said to his servant: "Thomas, my man, I want you to take this parcel to the station, and put on the top, 'This side up with care.' Now, you understand?" "Yes, sir, said Thomas, He returns in about half-an-hour. "Well, Thomas," said his master, "did you manage it?" "Yes, sir, I took it and wrote on the top, 'This side up with care, and to be sure they wouldn't miss seeing it, I wrote it on the bottom, too!"

"I want you to take her voice under your care, professor," said the fond mother to the eminent musician. "I think she has a great future." "That's possible, ma'am. You want me to make a prima donna of her?" "Yes. She's very quick to learn and very soniable." "Did you say amiable?" "Certainly," "I she never inclined to quarrel?" "Never." "Madam, your ambitions cannot be realised. I may teach her to sing, but I can never make a prima donna of her."

A sceptical young collegian confronted an old Quaker with the statement that he did not believe in the Bible. Said the Quaker: "Does thee believe in France?" "Yes, for though I have not seen it, I have seen others that have. Besides, there are plenty of proofs that such a country does exist." "Then thee will not believe anything thee or others have not seen?" "No; to be sure I won't." "Did thee over see thise own brains?" "No." "Does thee believe that hast any?" The young man was seized with a fit of silence.

A DIGNIFIED Berkshire rector, now, unhappily, deceased, interested himself in getting first places for little workhouse girls of fourteen, belonging to his parish. Having satisfactorily placed one of his protegies in the family of a small tradesman at the East End, as "general servant," he wrote as kind note to the child a few months later, to say he should be coming up to town, shortly for the May Meetings, and would, if possible, call and see how she was getting on. To his surprise and bewilderment he received a curt reply by return of post, saying "Honoured Sir,—Emily Bates is very sorry, and i should be pleas to see you, but no followers is allowed."

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## SOCIETY.

THE Empress Eugénie is going to Scotland about the middle of August for a few weeks' residence at Abergeldie Castle, which has been lent to her by the Queen.

THE Prince of Wales is to stay at Goodwood mill the following Friday attenuous, when he will proceed to Portamouth, and thence to Cowes.

THE fioral cradle presented to the Duchess of York is composed of artificial roses. The outside of the cradle is of crimson roses, the pillow of white roses, with a draping of fairy roses and emilar.

It is understood that the Duc de Nemours will shortly vacate Bushey Park, which is to be granted to the Duke and Duchess of York. Bushey was the dower house of Queen Adelaide, after whose death it was lent by the Queen to the Duc de Nemours, but it has been seldom occupied by him during the last few years.

The Empress of Austria tires out the guides at Madouna di Campiglio and other places in the Southern Tyrol, where her pedestrian feats excite the greatest actorishment and interest. She thinks nothing of a walk of twenty miles, and the rapidity of her pace renders it almost impossible for any of her attendants to keep up with her. The guides have given her the sobriquet of "the chamois."

The stick which her Majesty uses, and with which she is photographed, was presented to Charles II. by a Worcester citizen, the handle being subsequently added by the Queen herself. It consists of an Indian idol, which is historical itself, in that it was a part of the never-to-beforgotten pillage of Seringapatam.

The bazaar which is to be held at Balmoral on August 29th and 30th in aid of the fund for building the new church at Crathie is to be a very grand affair, and the Queen will herself spen it on the first day. Stalls are to be held by the Duchess of Connaught, Princess Louise, Princess Beatrice, the Duchess of Fife, Lady Cunliffs Brooks, Mrs. Farquharson of Invercentld, and Lady Borthwick, who will then be residing at Glemmick House.

The title of the Tsarevitch is a corruption of Tsessarewitsch; that is Cesar's son. This title, however, belongs only to the eldest boy, at least to the one who has been designed by the Autocrat as his heir, the Emperor being free to choose the one he thinks best qualified for the arduous task.

The Prince of Wales goes to Homburg about the 16th, after his visit to Cowes, for a stay of three weeks, and he will afterwards be the guest of the Duke and Duchess of Coburg at Reinhardsbunn, in the Thuringian Forest, round which place there is some of the very best shooting in Europe. The woods, which extend for many miles in every direction, form one vast deer preserve, and the district has been a famous hunting-ground for the last six centuries, and formerly swarmed also with wild boars and bears. The Thuringian stags are far finer and heavier beast than the Scotch red-deer, and the ducal forests usually afford a bag of between ninety and one hundred stags in the course of four to five weeks' shooting. The season commences on the 15th.

THE German Emperor does not now expect to reach Cowes until Saturday the 4th, because he wishes to stay in Norway as long as possible, and he must return to Potsdam for a couple of days before he leaves for England. It is quite likely that Prince Henry of Prussis will accompany the Emperor, who is to stay at Cowes, according to present arrangements, until early on the morning of the 12th. There will be two State banquets in the Indian Room at Osborne during the Emperor's visit, and the Prince of Wales is to entertain him at dinner on board the Victoria and Albert, which will be in the Roads during the regatta week. The Emperor intends to have two dinner parties on board the Hohensollers, and on Tuesday, August 7th, he will be present at the annual R.Y.S. house dinner.

## STATISTICS.

The annual loss of vessels of the world is calculated at about 2,200.

ONLY about 1 in every 1,000 married couples live to celebrate their golden wedding.

According to careful estimates, three hours of close study wear out the body more than a whole day of hard physical exertion.

The tramways of Great Britain and Ireland receive in fares annually at the present time about £2,000,000, and the omnibusses about £2,000,000. There are about 45,000 cabs in the United Kingdom, which altogether earn in fares about £8,200,000 per annum.

STATISTICS given by the Guardians of Health in Russia state that the microbes found in the dust taken from various railway carriages were nearly in relative proportion to the classes. One square inch of first-class dust yielded 16,000; second-class, 84,000; and third-class, 78,000.

## GEMS.

It is better to fail in trying to do good than not to try.

OUR grand business is, not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.

A CHEERFUL temper, joined with innocence, will make beauty attractive, knowledge delightful, and wit good-natured.

ADAPT thyself to the things with which thy lot has been cast, and the men among whom thou hast received thy portion.

When two paths lie before the Christian, one strewn with flowers and the other rugged and full of thorns—if the choice is given—it is ever safer to take the rougher path.

True religion extends alike to the intellect and the heart. Intellect is in vain if it lead not to emotion, and emotion is vain if not enlightened by intellect; and both are vain if not guided by truth and leading to duty.

# HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

BROILED OYSTERS.—Take twelve large oysters, drain, season with salt and pepper, dip them in a tablespoonful of melted butter, dredge with flour, and broil over a quick fire until the edges curl. Trim four slices of toast, butter, and lay three oysters on each slice, which should be just large enough for them.

Sweet-Potato Points.—Three good-sized potates, boil with skins on; peel, mash fine, season with salt, pepper, and a bit of red papper, a little butter and just a dash of toilk. Grease a white paper and put in a small dripping-pan; divide potato in six equal parts, form in little pyramids, rub over with well-beaten egg, brown in quick oven, serve on a napkin in an oval dish with a little parsley round.

GREEN PEAS.—Shell the peas, but do not wash them, as washing destroys the delicate flavour. Shake the peas in a colander to remove the fine particles. Boil twenty minutes, or till tender. Drain the peas, turn them into a hot dish, season with salt. Place a pat or two of butter on top, and set them into the oven for three or four minutes. Be sure and put the cover on the dish before putting it in the oven.

Deficate Cabbage.—Sice half a head of cabbage very fine; put a little butter in a fryingpan and wilt the cabbage, cooking it several minutes. Remove from fire and make a dressing of yolk of one egg, half a cupful of milk, scant teaspoonful of fiour, a teaspoonful of sugar, tablespoonful of vinegar, and a little mustard, half a saltspoonful of salt and a pinch of pepper. Stir all well, adding the vinegar last; pour over the cabbage and let it boil up once.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

In 1606 anyone absent from church on Sunday was fined one shilling.

NAVAE salutes to the flag are as old as the time of Afred the Great.

ELEPHANTS are very fond of gin, but will not touch champagne.

A VERY small humming-bird, not much larger than a house-fly, is common in the East Indies.

It is said that whales can remain under the surface of the ocean for an hour and a half.

The marriage of the Grand Duchess Xenia will take place at Peterhof, the summer palace of the Czar.

SCIENTISTS believe that Nebraska, Kansas, and a part of the Indian Territory are situated over an underground sea.

THERE is a law in Germany forbidding restaurateurs to serve beer to people who have eaten fruit.

Some insects pass several years in preparatory states of existence, and, finally, when perfect live but a few hours.

Most of the numerous temples throughout China are painted red; everything lucky and pleasant among the Chinese is of vermilion colour.

THERE are some vegetables that can scarcely be distinguished from animals, and some animals that seem to have all the characteristics of a vegetable.

It is reported that a Russian chemist has found a simple means to check the progress of gangrene without reserving to amputation, consisting of a simple application of an electric current,

As frost, raised to its utmost intensity, produces the sensation of fire, so any good quality, overwrought and pushed to excess turns into its own contrary.

The longest dress train on record was that of Catherine de Medici on the occasion of her marriage. It was forty-eight yards in length and wasborne by twenty pages.

Some people call the stormy petrel the "lamp bird." It is so oily that the fishermen of St. Kilda stick a wick in the mouth of a dead specimen, light it, and it burns for an hour.

THE Ketworth chestnut, near Gloucester, England, was a boundary tree in King Stephen's reign, and is spoken of as an old tree in the annals of King John's reign. It measures 53 feet incircunference.

The "running antelope" is the name of a Brazilian flower which has on its white petals a number of dark lines and dots which resemble the form of an antelope, with limbs outstretched, and head thrown back, as if fleeing for life.

The test of excellence applied to Japanese swords years ago was very rigid. It was to suspend the blade horizontally, edge upward, under a tree, and a good weapon was expected to cut in twain any leaf that fell upon it.

THE greatest whirlpool is the Maelstrom off the Norway coast. It is an eddy between the mainland and an island, and when the current is in one direction and the wind in another no ship can withstand the fury of the waves. Whales and sharks have been cast ashore and killed. The current is estimated to run thirty miles an hour.

It is not generally known that in France it is forbidden under severe penalties for anyone to give infants under a year any form of solid food unless such be ordered by a written prescription signed by a legally-qualified medical man. Nurses are also forbidden to use in the rearing of infants confided to their care, at any time or under any pretext whatever, any nursing bottle provided with a rubber tube.

An English scientist, after careful experiments, finds that when potatoes are cooked without removing the skins they lose only three per cent, of nutritive quality through extraction of the juice. When the skins were removed before boiling, the loss was fourteen per cent, which makes the process of cooking the potatoes without their jackets an exceedingly wasteful

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B. C.-You should have personal instruction.

E. K.-There are many books of the sort; we do not

P. O .- The heir of the Duke of Sparts is his son,

BETS's.-It depends entirely upon the writer and the quality of the story.

Record. A witness to a will forfelts any legsoy made under it in his favour. Time Lover.—Send her a larger or more elegant touquet than the others.

H. P.-Any person using a crest or cost of arms is itable to pay tax upon it.

Arris. Josiah, the name of a great Hebrew king, meant the are of the Lord.

isans. --Bells comes from the Latin through the

REGGER.-For a list of the subscribers write in each as to the secretary of the home.

Leven of Poursy. - The late Lord Tennyson was born at Somerby, in Lincolnshire.

Enquerrs.—It is good form to acknowledge the receipt of invitations of every sort.

An Ignorast Suspect.—The mother of Princess May of Teck, is cousin to the Prince of Wales.

C. S. - 4 music license is required where music or duncing is habitually reserted to on the premises.

LOVER OF SINGING.-We are sorry we cannot help, aving no recollection of the words you mention.

F. S.—Boats have accidentally "gone over" the ligara Falls, but the people in them have been

hossar.—To enter the office of a civil engineer, he chould become a good draughteman and should study mathematics.

CHICK.—The name of the Italian composer referred to is pronounced Maskaunyee, with the accent on the second syllable.

INQUIER.—There is no such license. You should apply to either the clergyman of your parish or the registrar of the district.

Invario.—The merest dash of chanamon in a cup of chocolate after it is poured is said to add a piquant and undistinguishable flavour.

Andrews. --Bhow yourself a person to whom a woman may reasonably look for protection and companionably, and then frankly offer her your hand,

CONSTANT READER —It was De bionts, a Frenchman, who, with his associates, narced the country which they colonized Acadia, now Nova Scotia, in 1604.

Hillon.—Spouge with diluted benzine, and hang in the air where neither sun nor rain can get at it; the more wind it has the better to remove the smell.

Puzzing --accidental colours are those depending upon some affection of the eye, and not belonging to light itself, or any quality of the luminous object.

An Old Rhades.—We believe there are some at each town, but we would advise you to address a letter to the adjutant of the corps, New Exchange-court, Strand.

G. B.—In case of war Germany and France could recall from England and other countries those of their subjects who might be Hable to render military service.

MAURICE.—A penalty of £10 may be imposed for tving an unatamped receipt where a stamp is required; ut only the inland Revenue authorities can proce-

Justice.—Plane keys yellow with age can be cleaned by a disting of one ounce of mitric and in ten ounces of act water. Apply with a brush, and wash off with thannel.

Loa — Lemon will do for the yellow white sailor what shoe yellah does for the worn black one. Romove the clibbon band, and with a slice of lemon clean the straw theroughly.

A. B.—If you see fit to carry one, that is strictly your affair, and no one has the right to criticise you for it. If your neighbour carries one that is nobody's business but his own.

DEVERBUX.—Globe land is land belonging to the Church, and held for the benefit of the clergy of the parish. Tithes are combributions paid to the clergy by the cest of the parishioners.

REGULAR BRADING.—In science, read by preference the newest works, in literature the oldest. The classical literature is always modern. New books revive and redecentle old ideas; old books suggest and invigorate new ideas.

FLORA.—Lee has been used for some time to preserve cut flowers. When kept in a refrigerator over night they are found in the morning to be almost as real, and fragrant as when first plucked. If a little salt be added to the ion it will help to preserve them.

- When a gentleman walks with a lady, carry her wraps and sunshade when als does not require them. Custom differs in different localities as to offering one's arm, but it is usually thought proper to do so in the evening.

N. W.—Consult some strictly reliable deutist. There may be some constitutional trouble in addition to the local difficulty. If there is not, use a weak solution of alum water or a wash of carbolic acid and giveoring much diluted.

ANNOUS.—We would advise you to select some judicious friend who is on good terms with all the members of the family, and who, with their consent, will be willing to undertake the task of giving to each such portion of the effects as will satisfy, if not gratify,

In Want of Advice.—We cannot undertake to recom-mens particular societies of this kind. We should advise you before entering one of them to assure your-soil of the respectability of the men who have the management of it, and the sound condition of the society.

PHILIP.—It is always wise to make a will, no matter how small the property may be, and say who is to have it. Even if the only clothee or furniture, it will save much unpleasantness to have it distributed among those to when they are intended by some one named for the purpose.

VERY WORKED.—Set for traps three or four plates with a little melted lard; lay them about where the pesta come, and whenever you find a good number on a plate hold it over the fire and they will drop off with the lard and meet their fate; reset and persevere and you will get rid of them all.

QUESTIONER.—It was usually a small round tower, for the station of an advanced guard, placed just before the outward gate of the castle yard or ballium. In dittee or towns the barbican was a watch tower, placed at some important part of the droumvallation. It had some-times a ditch and drawbridge of its own.

#### A WOMAN'S BEART

A woxan's heart is a ourlous thing!
You may bruise and break it, and roughly fling
The bauble away as a useless thing;
But the sunshine and warrath of a kindly word
Will nourish the tendrils broken,
And newness of life is within it stirred
By a word so gently spoken.

Oh! woman's heart is of priceless worth,
The tenderest love within has its birth.
Go search, and you'll find there is naught on earth
That can rival the wealth of her loving heart,
When once it is freely given;
That can comfort the sad, such joy impart,
Though with grief her own is riven.

But woman's heart is a foolish thing;
With never a doubtall its wealth 'twill bring
And freely bestow. To its ided will cling.
Though the world may condemn. Ah i a woman's
heart,
To reason will never listen;
She will peril her soul, seern every art,
And barter her hopes of heaven—

Will stand unwearfed, through night and day, By the bed of pain; will tenderly lay Her own life down; through years will watch and

For the soul of one who could never know, Could ne'er believe, except in part, All the atrength of love, all the joy and we That lie concealed in a woman's heart.

ONE IN DOUBL.—It is not at all arbitrary to wear crape even for one's nearest relative. Many persons in the best society do not wear mounting at all. It is not required that the mother wear crape for a five year old child. It she does, from six months to a year would be the limit. The same rule holds good with other rela-

ELLA.—In all cases try first a bit of blotting or brown paper over the spot and then a hot smoothing iron laid upon that; the paper should absorb the grease so that nothing may remain but dust, which a little scap and water judiciously sponged on may remove; but a more olaborate recipe is four parts (or times) alcohol to one of liquid aumonia, and about half a part of other; apply the liquid to the spot, then rub well with a sponge and clean water. clean water.

One who Wants to Know.—Mora is described as a counter-irritant, used especially in cases of gout, the imatism, and nervous disorders. It has been in use in Japan, where it originated, many conturios. The fluer woolly parts of the young leaves of wormwood are applied to the skin in the form of small cones, and are set on fire by means of a magnifying glass. They burn very alowly, and leave a blister, which afterwards breaks and discharges. The operation is painful, but not severely so. not severely so.

not severely so.

J. S. B.—Put some linseed oil into a stone jar, and place that in a saucepan of water. Sot it on the fire. Carchilly provide that when the water both none of it gets into the oil. When the water has been boiling round the jar for about half an hour add a little sugar, honey or treacle, and a little yellow resh, and continue to boil until the mixture forms a sticky paste when cold, which you can test by taking out a little from time to time to cool. When it is sufficiently boiled spread it while in a hot liquid state on papers, which should be previously prepared by scaling them in a saturated solution of slura, and then drying them before use.

ONE WHO WANTS TO KNOW.—For persons in good-health, the best time for bathing is thought to be immediately on rising in the morning; for invalids or persons of a delicate habit of body the forencon or avening is suggested, either being the period when the system has been strengthened by food, and also relieved from the labour of digestion.

Mass., Sulphur of intent is generally recommended for dogs troubled with the mange. It is a contagious disease, and difficult to get rid of when once contracted. As you represent yours to be a valuable dog we suggest that you apply to a veterinary chemist for an eintment that he can recommend, and to keep using it until assured that the disease has disappeared, for it is very apt to break out again. Sulphur ointment is made by mixing one ounce of sulphur with two ounces of lard.

mixing one ounce of sulphur with two ounces of lard. Yown Wirs.—The pretty and favourite old time deasort called floating island is more attractive if each little islet of whisped cream is crowned with a fow dots of crimson jelly or a candied oherry. Another method of serving makes it an extremely ornamental dish. Thicken the custard with a little golatine so that it will mould nicely, yet not be stiff as blanc mange. Use the little tin moulds, into which you turn the custard when nearly cold, first offling them. When first turn out on a glass dish and insert here and there spikes of blanched almonds. A delicious syrup to pour over is made by dissolving some currant jelly in wine in quantity sufficient to float the small blands.

Our Simpsoner.—There are several ways of making

sufficient to float the small Islands.

OLD SUBSCRIBER.—There are several ways of making these interesting toys, but the exicat and least expensive is to put half a dozon serve-eyes into the casing on either side of a window. Fasten across the space string, either those of fine catgut, such as are used for guitar or band, or home-made ones of very hard twisted and waxed silk. The one end firmly, draw the other as tight as possible, and the also with one end through the ring or eye. Then turn the screws slowly and carefully until the strings give the desired sound. An entire octave can be made, and if the window is opened when the breeze is blowing, soft and sweet cherds will be heard, increasing with the force of the wind.

the force of the wind.

MATHE.—After carpets are tacked down, they should be carefully swept then gone over with a stiff scrubbing brush dipped in naphtha. Spots made by sweets must be removed by water, and those caused by gums of any sort, varnish or wax, must be taken off by spirits and heat. It is well to clean such spots from Brusels or volvet bofore laying the carpets. Fill a large jug with boiling water. Piace it bottom side up so that it will not the over, place the waxy or gummy spot over this sprinkle with buckwheat flour, magnesis, French chalk or dry sawdest until just covered, then place a warm iron over the spot. The heat will soften gine of wax and the pawdered substance will draw it out and absorb it. After which apply alcohol or spirits of turpontine to finish the discusing process.

Dox.—Purple of cassius, from the name of the dis-

turpentine to finish the decaning process.

Dos.—Purple of cassius, from the name of the discover, A Cassius, a German physician of the seventeenth century, is a colouring substance of very ancient use, which is prepared by adding a mixed solution of protechloride and bichloride of its gradually to a solution of chloride of gold, when a more or less abundant predictate of the double stannate of gold and this thrown down. It is solution in ammonia, yielding a beautiful purple solution, from which it can be obtained, with solld form unchanged, by ovaporating the ammonia. Mixed with borns, or some furthle glass, it is employed by the potter to communicate a rich purple or rose this to the botter kinds of china. It also imparts the red colour to the kind of glass known as Bohemman glass. The word is pronounced as though spelled kash-i-us, the secent on the first syllable.

B. J.—To take an impression of a butterfly, kill it

secent on the first syllable.

B. J.—To take an impression of a butterfly, kill it without spoiling its wings, which should be spread out as precisely as possible in a flying position. Thes, with a small brush, take a piece of white paper, wash a part of it with gum-water, a little thicker than ortinarily used, so that it may easily dry. Afterwards, with the butterfly on the paper, out off the body close to the wings, and throwing it away, lay the paper one asmooth board, with the butterfly upward, and laying another paper over that, put the whole preparation into a screw press and screw down very hard, letting it remain under that pressure for half an hour. Next take off the wings of the butterfly, and there will be found remaining on the paper a perfect impression of them with all their various colours distinctly marked. Afterwards draw between the wings of the lampression the body of the butterfly, and colour it after the impression the body of the butterfly, and colour its

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